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THE HOMILIST.

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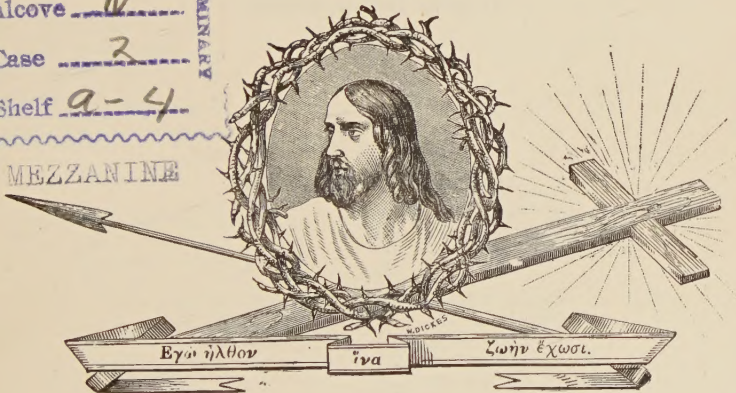
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Leading Homily.

A SUMMER HOMILY ON THE TREES.

"LET THE FIELD BE JOYFUL, AND ALL THAT IS THEREIN: THEN SHALL ALL THE TREES OF THE WOOD REJOICE BEFORE THE LORD."
—*Psalm xcvi. 12.*

IT is in a season like the present, one of peculiarly luxuriant foliage and blossom, that we, more vividly than at other times, sympathise with Old Testament Psalmists and Prophets in their frequent and joyous allusions to the Trees of the Wood, more keenly than at other times appreciate the spiritual lessons which, through the Trees of the Wood, they so richly convey. In these early summer months our hearts go out to them in their exultant glorying in the "tall cedars and choice fir trees of Carmel," the "oaks" of Bashan, the "woods" of Ephraim, the "forests" of Hareth, and the "vines" of Silmah; and our imaginations are more susceptible to their teaching, as they tell how the "Cedar," the "Vine," or the Palm Tree symbolises the growth and grandeur of a great nation, the watchful care of God over His people, or the righteousness and fruitfulness of a good man's life. (Ezekiel xxxi. 3; Psalm lxxx. 8; Jeremiah xvii. 8; Psalm xcii. 12; Isaiah lxi. 3.)

It cannot surely be for mere poetical illustration, for the mere gratification of the artistic taste, that these Hebrew writers, holy men of old, who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, so frequently drew the thoughts of men to the Trees of the

Wood; surely behind, and underneath, and giving vitality to their allusions, there must be spiritual meaning, spiritual teaching, which it will be well for us to get at; and surely, if by searching we can get at it, our searching will be well repaid. The "river" that speaks to us of the river of the Water of Life; the "rainbow" that speaks of the covenant-faithfulness of God, the "mountains" that speak of His righteousness, or the "Trees" that tell of His planting; are not these earthly things, which give us such vivid impressions of the heavenly things, worthy of our closest, our devoutest thought? I propose to speak at present of some of the spiritual lessons which, at this season of the year, the Trees of the Wood, through the suggestions of Nature and the associations of Scripture, are bringing before us. Let us, while their leaf is yet green, listen to the teaching of the Trees.

I.—THE LESSONS FROM THE CHARACTERISTICS COMMON TO ALL TREES.

1. *Life, growth*, the striving after the end for which it exists, the perfection of its being; this is the first suggestion we get from the trees. What amazing vitality there is in them! what marvellous power and activity, day by day taking up the elements of heat, and air, and moisture, day by day taking on such forms of grandeur and grace! How busy the roots are reaching down into the earth to find nutriment there, or "wrapping themselves round about the place of stones" to acquire thereby strength and foot-hold to resist the winter's storms! What a ceaseless upward flow of life in these massive trunks! how the great branches vitalise every tiniest twig! how busy the leaves are, ceaselessly drawing upon them blessings from above! "There is no speech, nor language, their voice is not heard," it is in silence the life-structure is built up; but by the eye of the imagination you may see, in the ear of reason you may hear the ceaseless flow, the unresting reaching-forth of life.

This is the first thing we learn from the Trees of the Wood: life, growth, effort after perfection, suggesting to us what we are here for, what we have been created for, what as Trees of Righteousness we have been planted for: warning us that unless we be like the Trees planted by the rivers of water, we are

missing the end of our being, we are failing of eternal life. You have passed through a forest the morning after a wild tempestuous night, and you have seen scattered all round the prostrate trees, the already withering branches and leaves, the virtue going, gone out of them, only dead timber now, not any longer trees! Well, a man without the vigour of spiritual life in him, without the inspiring breath of the Almighty, to what will you liken him but to a prostrate withered trunk? There may, indeed, be still a few green shoots coming forth from that uprooted tree, and there may be natural goodnesses and amiabilities coming forth from this unspiritual man, but unless there be in him the life which manifests itself in growth, in effort after perfection, rooting and stablishing himself in the faith and fear of God; unless "he is green before the sun, and his branch shooteth forth in his garden," then, despite appearance, his "roots are dried up beneath," his "stock has not taken root in the earth;" he may have a name to live, but he is dead! On the other hand, take the man who is rooted and grounded in God, drawing nourishment from the undersoil of Divine realities, feeling within him the very presence of the vitalising power of God, to what is such an one to be likened? what fitter similitude for him than "the Tree planted by the river of waters,—his leaf always green," "flourishing, like the Palm tree, to show that the Lord is upright?" Life, life abundantly is the teaching of the Trees.

2. *Productiveness, fruitfulness*, manifestation and justification of the profession of life by fruit; that great characteristic of all trees whereby they produce the bud, the blossom, the fruit, without which they have not accomplished the end for which they exist; without which, at the right time, all professions of life are vain. *At the right time*; for here, as nature might teach us, and as our Saviour explicitly teaches in the Parable of "the Blade, the Ear, and the full Corn in the Ear," we must acknowledge the appointed seasons. We do not expect the mid-day glory of the sun at the early dawn, we do not look for the strength of the man in the arm of the child, and we do not expect autumn to reach back and fill the lap of spring with its own fulness. Give the life that is within these trees time to

mature; let the busy cells in orderly diligence do their appointed work, let them have time to absorb the nutritive elements of earth, and air, and sky; in due season the Apple tree of the garden will meet you with its sudden smile of blossom, the Hawthorn will deck herself in virgin whiteness before your eyes, the Laburnum reach down her clusters of living gold, the Chestnut hold up to heaven its innumerable silver censers, unseen clouds of incense its offering unto God for a sweet smelling savour. Bud, blossom, fruit; in their season; the joy and crown of the year! The Trees of the Lord are full of sap that they may glorify Him with their fruit! "A certain man had a Fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came and sought fruit thereon and found none. Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold these three years I come seeking fruit on this Fig tree and find none, cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground?"

The application of all this is plain. Is the professing Christian without any fruit of any kind? he has a name to live, but he is dead! Sailing up some of the Scottish lochs on a summer day, and while still at a considerable distance from the shore, the eye is sometimes regaled by what seems thereon the most exquisite tree scenery brightening up and making glorious the dark waters. This as seen at a distance: approaching the shore, and trusting to enjoy still more the lovely vision, what is the surprise and disappointment to find nothing but bare rock, moss-grown stones, dry heather! Whence the illusion? The sun shining out from the fringe of a cloud in a peculiar state of the atmosphere makes all the loveliness: come near to it and there is nothing but the cold bare rock. Like this bare rock, the merely nominal professor may to the observer from a distance (and the nearest can but look from a distance) be "green before the sun," but let the glamour and the gleam which this cast over it be dispelled and it is seen to be all illusion. The sunlight is there, it but withers; the rains fall, only to fall off the bare rock.

It is not all thus: there is the blessed other side. The truly Christian man, the truly spiritual man is a tree of life, bringing forth his fruit in his season, yea, at all seasons; like those trees of which travellers tell, from whose branches all the year round

you may pluck and eat; like that Tree of Life of which the Seer of Patmos tells, the tree which bare twelve manner of fruits and yielded her fruit every month and the leaves for the healing of the nations. The true Christian is a tree of righteousness, and the fruit of the righteous is a tree of life.

3. *Beauty, gracefulness, symmetry of parts, proportion.* How often we have remarked during the past few weeks what a beautiful object is a tree, its branches swaying in the wind, while every leaf is quivering to the quivering twig, or standing so silently that we could say it slept. In motion, we are captivated with the measured movements of its branches, movements that tell us something of the mystery of the "rhythmic music of the universe"; at rest, we delight ourselves with the order of its parts, the symmetry of its form, the unity of the perfect whole. It is the same with every kind of tree, whether those "trees of God" that raise themselves aloft and seem to seek communion with a higher world, or those more humble ones under the grateful shade of which even prophets have laid themselves down to rest; whether they be those whose dense foliage defies the mid-day sun, or those whose every leaf casts back its shining; whether it be the giant trunk with its great "rounded mass of green," or the slender stem with tapering branch and twig. In all there is the gladness of beauty.

Is there anything here of spiritual suggestion, of spiritual teaching, anything to let us see what manner of men our Maker and Redeemer expects us to become? God delights in the beautiful, else why so many forms of it from His Hands? He is not content with life and growth and fruit, He must have beauty as well; and should we be content till in our experience also we realise it? Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us. How many unlovely Christians there are! How much that mars the fair face of their religion! Suppose the trees had put out their branches only on one side, leaving the other side unsightly and bare, or suppose they had been wanting in their rounded or tapering completeness, how much less attractive they had been. It is so with many Christian men, they grow all on one side, they are beautiful only at one place. Kind to their families and

friends, ready to help in every good work, but hasty and rude and intemperate in speech; busy at religious meetings and such like, and truly sincere and devout, but not very scrupulous about the truth, and not backward in driving a hard bargain; the very soul of honour and integrity, along with a moody and ungovernable temper and pride almost after the measure of a demon's; devotion to the cause of Christ, which must have its own way, and which if it does not have its own way flings down its tools and sulks and will not work. Looking upon these men only on the one side we say, how beautiful they are; pity that when we come to see them nearer at hand and all round, there is so much of the unbeautiful, the unlovely, the unbecoming which mars our delight.

It is not so with many. There are Christian men and women not a few whose lives can only best be characterised when we call them lovely; so full of harmony they are, so free in obedience to highest law. We are drawn to them by an instinct we cannot resist; in them and upon them we see the beauty of the Lord. We feel that they must have been often and long in the presence of Him who is chief among ten thousand and altogether lovely, and that they have carried away with them the reflection of the glory of His Face. These, to keep to the figure of the text, are the Trees of Righteousness, the planting of the Lord by which He is glorified.

II.—THE LESSONS FROM THE CHARACTERISTICS PECULIAR TO SOME TREES.

1. This one to begin with, for example, that *every tree has its own peculiar quality*, in virtue of which it differs from every other: that every individual Christian, every man, has his own peculiar quality in virtue of which he differs, is meant to differ from every other.

Looking out upon the Trees in the winter-time, when everything is bare, we see little or nothing of these peculiarities, nothing but the most general features. Wait till the summer has clothed each after its kind with the raiment fit for it! How the colour deepens into the darkest green in the sombre pine, and how it changes by undistinguishable gradation of tint to the most delicate shade in the Scotch Fir: how again, the *form* comes

out, rounded, massive, slender, dispread; in what *diverse ways* sending forth, or holding up their branches, each after its own special kind. Here is one—the Poplar—running up its branches almost parallel with the main stem, and every tiniest twig following the same law; and here is another—the Oak—sending out its huge boughs almost at right angles to the main trunk, as if it would show how it defies gravitation and the tempest at the same time. Here is one—the Birch—slender, dispread, sensitive in its every twig and leaf to the gentlest breeze, and here is another—the Chestnut—with its “green cloud” of leaves—a massive totality, patient, impressive, calm. Here is one—the Elm—lofty, many branched, holding its great sunshade over our heads; and here is another—the Willow—with its graceful downward droop of branches, contented still to droop. In the Oak strength and endurance; in the Poplar and Birch delicacy and sensitiveness; in the Chestnut full-sounded harmony; in the Elm lofty grandeur; in the Pine grave austerity; for as star differeth from star, so tree differeth from tree in character and glory.

And so in like manner, though in the Church of the living God, this Forest of His Carmel, all be Trees of Righteousness, yet has each of them its own characteristic, and each of them room for the exercise of its own special activity. There is room for Paul and his profound devotion, for Apollos and his eloquence, John and his contemplativeness, Peter and his restless zeal. There is room for the guilelessness of Nathanael, the humility of Philip, the martyr spirit of Stephen, and the righteousness of James. There is room for Lydia and her hospitality, the churches of Achaia and their liberality, the early missionaries and their enthusiasm, the defenders of the faith with their learning, the devout women with their prayers. Or, if you would prefer to go back to that ancient forest where the trees of God, full of sap, stand up to sunlight, and you see their scars as well as their glory, you will find there the faithfulness of faithful Abraham, the gentleness of Isaac, the purity of Joseph; there the meekness of Moses, the courage of Joshua, the integrity of Samuel, the passionate devotion of David; there the wisdom of Solomon, the fire of Elijah, the mingled passion and pathos of Isaiah and of

Jeremiah, the impetuous vehemence of Ezekiel, the seer of visions, and the sage counsellings of Daniel the interpreter of dreams.

2. *Special work.* This thought is implied, has been anticipated in what has just been said. If we have been endowed with special gifts and graces it is that these may come out in special work; if we have what nobody else has, it is that we may do what nobody else can. Generally true as it is that trees in the mass are of great use in the economy of nature; in the modification of climate for example, or in their effect upon animal existence: it is also specially true that individual trees have their own peculiar ways of producing these results. So true is this of one of them, the Pine tree, that it has been singled out as having been providentially created to teach the great spiritual lesson of individual work. A very special quality of the Pine tree is to send its roots, not downwards as others that require depth of earth, but obliquely, where if it but get a hold it will live. But in this special quality there is the special work: to be a covert, a protection to the rich harvests that are to be reaped behind their friendly shade.

And so in the forests of God, among the trees there, there is special work for special gifts. Some are more fitted for the maintenance and defence of moral purity and sound doctrine, others for the more private comforting and building up of weak or wavering seekers after God, and others still for the promotion of true piety among the young. Well, this is the work which God has given, because He has fitted them to do. Each has his gift; each has his work.

3.—But one word with regard to the special lesson which the words of the text so specially teach,—the lesson of *worship*,—the homage of the creature to the great Creator of all. The Hebrew mind saw nothing out of the way, nothing incongruous in the worship of the Trees. In his ascriptions of praise he calls upon the “fruitful trees and all Cedars,” yea, all the trees of the field to rejoice before the Lord. To the Hebrew the stars rayed forth the glory of the Lord, and the everlasting hills bowed themselves down before the God of the whole earth; the voice of the Lord was upon the waters, His way was in the deep, and His path in

the mighty waters; the trees of the field rejoiced before Him! And why all this? and for what spiritual end in the upward progress of man? Surely to attune his heart and mind to that spirit of worship, that reverential homage, that glad rejoicing before the Lord for which he, of all the creatures He has made, is most fitted; surely to bring him into sympathy with that spirit of devotion with which the universe is filled, where there rises continually the song, "Holy, holy, holy!" The highest moments of a man's life are when he worships, for they are the moments when he stands face to face with God; the noblest moments are when he worships, for it is then he freely and gladly gives himself to, and rejoices in, God as his chief joy. Jacob awaking from a dream of angels, and saying, "surely God was in this place;" David singing, "a day in Thy courts is better than a thousand;" Isaiah exclaiming, "Here am I, send me;" Paul caught up into the third heavens, and seeing things unspeakable; these men knew the deep joy of worship, the very gladness and ecstasy of it: they entered the city of God before the time, lost, and found themselves in God.

Life, growth, fruitfulness, beauty, special qualifications and special work, the offering up of all to God: this is the Gospel of the trees; good tidings of good to which it will be well for us to give heed. A living, fruitful, soul-beautifying faith: the moral and spiritual bestowments calling for corresponding activities, and the worship which is due from every creature to the Creator; from the redeemed nature of man, to Him who at such an infinite sacrifice redeemed him: is not this the end of our being, of every man who has laid hold of the hope set before him in the Gospel,—who has been brought nigh unto God by the Cross of His Son!

May our meditation on the Gospel of the trees bring us to a deeper sense of our need of the Gospel of the Cross, the blood of Christ which taketh away all sin. Rightly contemplated, they will so lead us, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, without whom Scripture is mere letter, and nature is dumb: the Trees of the Field will lead us to Him whose name is "The Branch," "The Plant of Renown." Amen.

GLASGOW.

PETER RUTHERFORD.

Homiletical Commentary.

HOMILETIC SKETCH ON THE GOSPEL OF ST. JOHN.

The Realm of Love the Sphere of Religion.

"SO WHEN THEY HAD DINED, JESUS SAITH TO SIMON PETER, SIMON, SON OF JONAS, LOVEST THOU ME MORE THAN THESE? HE SAITH UNTO HIM, YEA, LORD; THOU KNOWEST THAT I LOVE THEE. HE SAITH UNTO HIM, FEED MY LAMBS. HE SAITH TO HIM AGAIN THE SECOND TIME, SIMON, SON OF JONAS, LOVEST THOU ME? HE SAITH UNTO HIM, YEA, LORD; THOU KNOWEST THAT I LOVE THEE. HE SAITH UNTO HIM, FEED MY SHEEP. HE SAITH UNTO HIM THE THIRD TIME, SIMON, SON OF JONAS, LOVEST THOU ME? PETER WAS GRIEVED BECAUSE HE SAID UNTO HIM THE THIRD TIME, LOVEST THOU ME? AND HE SAID UNTO HIM, LORD, THOU KNOWEST ALL THINGS; THOU KNOWEST THAT I LOVE THEE. JESUS SAITH UNTO HIM, FEED MY SHEEP. VERILY, VERILY, I SAY UNTO THEE, WHEN THOU WAST YOUNG, THOU GIRDEDST THYSELF, AND WALKEDST WHITHER THOU Wouldest: BUT WHEN THOU SHALT BE OLD, THOU SHALT STRETCH FORTH THY HANDS, AND ANOTHER SHALL GIRD THEE, AND CARRY THEE WHITHER THOU Wouldest NOT."—*John* xxi. 15-18.

EXPOSITION: Ver. 15.—"*So when they had dined*" (had broken their fast) "*Jesus saith to Simon Peter.*" During the meal, perhaps, silence reigned supreme. There was the hush of reverent amazement. "*Simon, son of Jonas*" (John). It is noteworthy that Jesus does not call him Peter, which means rock, the high title which He had conferred upon him before his fall, but by his natural name. "*Lovest thou Me?*" "There are two Greek words alike rendered 'love' in our translation, but which have a different force. The love of this question *ἀγαπᾶς* signifies

the love of will, of judgment, or of moral feeling; nearly our English word to prize. The other is *φιλεῖς* which is simply affectional love, springing from the natural sensibility. In His question Jesus uses the former word; in his answer Peter uses the latter." "*More than these.*" Some say that Christ points to the fishes, or the boats, nets, &c., that is his worldly calling; others, which is more probable, to the disciples, who were present. Peter had said, in a somewhat boastful spirit,—"*Though all men shall be offended because of Thee, yet will I never be offended.*" (Matt.

xxvi. 33.) Our Lord might here imply the question, "Art thou of the same opinion now, Peter? Dost thou love Me more than these other disciples?" *"He saith unto Him, Yea, Lord; Thou knowest that I love Thee."* That is with the love of affection and tenderness. *"He saith unto him, Feed My lambs."* More exactly "little lambs."

Ver. 16.—*"He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me?"* The same word for love ἀγαπᾷς that Christ used before He uses here, which is the moral term for love, the love of purpose, judgment. In the reply, Peter uses the other term representing tender emotions. Christ says, "Prizest thou Me, Peter?" Peter says, *"Thou knowest that I love Thee."* *"He saith unto him, Feed (tend) my Sheep."* Be a shepherd of my sheep. He is now restored to the commission which he received before his fall, after his noble confession.

Ver. 17.—*"He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me?"* Here

Jesus uses the term for love which Peter had used, the more affectionate and tender word. True it does not represent love of such a high form, but it is love of a tenderer kind. They are intimately associated. *"Peter was grieved because He said unto him the third time, Lovest thou Me?"* Was he grieved because of the demand now made on him, or because his Master deemed such a question necessary? The latter is the reason I trow. Thrice he had declared, "I know not the Man:" and now, thrice he is required to say, "I love the Man." *"Lord, Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee."* The question cut to the very quick, and in the agony of the heart, smarting beneath the wound, he appeals, in more emphatic words than before, to the all-seeing eye that could read the very inmost secrets of his life. *"Jesus saith unto him, Feed My sheep."* Some read, "little sheep." Here Jesus restores him to the high commission he had forfeited on the dark night of the trial.

HOMILETICS.—The subject of these words is the *Realm of Love the Sphere of Religion*. There are some who put religion in the realm of *sensuousness*. The mere excitement of the senses by paintings, sculpture, music, gorgeous rites, and tragic anecdotes, is regarded as piety; tears of mere animal sympathy are regarded

as the expressions of godly sorrow, &c. Some put religion in the sphere of *logic*. It is in some system of human thought, which men call orthodox, and nowhere else. Unless your intellect, however large it may be, will make its home in some little catechism or creed, you are more fiend than saint. And some put religion in the realm of *external performances*. If you attend your place of worship, pay all secular debts, subscribe to charities, you are a religious man. From the verses we may learn that the deep moral love of the heart is the seat of true religion. The question is, what is this love? From the passage we infer—

I.—THAT IT IS A SUPREME AFFECTION FOR CHRIST. “Lovest thou Me more than these?” That is, more than these disciples love Me? aye, “more even than thou lovest aught besides?” Observe, First: Religion is a *paramount affection*. It is not a common sentiment flowing in the ordinary current of emotions, sometimes rising into fervour and force and then passing away. It is either the master passion of the heart—the all in all—or it is nothing. Love never becomes religion until it grows into supremacy and becomes the monarch of the heart. Observe, Secondly: Religion is a paramount affection *for Christ*. “Lovest thou *Me*?” Not merely My *ideas*. It is almost impossible for men of intellect not to be ravished with Christ’s ideas. Not merely My *works*. Who could fail to admire Christ’s stupendous works of beneficence and compassion? Not merely My *heaven*. Christ’s heavens, the house of His Father, where there are “many mansions,” men may long for. But it is love for *Himself* that He demands. But why should Christ be loved supremely “more than these”?—more than father, mother, houses, lands, even these wonderful works of nature? (1) Because it is *right in itself*. Ought not the greatest benefactor have the most gratitude? The most perfect character have the highest admiration? The sublimest royalty to have the most absolute devotion? What benefactor is so great as He who gave Himself? What character so holy as He who died to “put away the sins” of the world? What authority so high as He who is the Prince of the kings of the earth? “He is exalted far above all,” &c. (2) Because it is *indispensable to man*. Man’s destiny, man’s happiness depends

upon the object of his love. The object of his love becomes either the wing of a seraph to bear him to the highest heaven, or a millstone to crush him to the deepest infamy and woe. Hence the mighty reason of this paramount affection. From the passage we infer concerning this love—

II.—THAT IT MUST BE A MATTER OF CONSCIOUSNESS WHEREVER IT EXISTS. Both our Lord's question and Peter's reply indicate this. A man cannot be ignorant of his supreme affection, it is the spring of his activities, the central fact of his experience. Here are the criteria. The object of supreme affection is ever (1) The *chief thought* in the *intellect*, (2) The *chief theme* in the *conversation*, (3) The *chief end* in the *design*, and (4) The *chief object* in the *desire*. All the laws of mind must be reversed before it can be otherwise. Concerning this love observe—

III.—THAT IT IS THE QUALIFICATION FOR OFFICE IN THE EMPIRE OF CHRIST. After Peter's confession, which was sincere, solemn, and thrice repeated, Christ gave him a commission in His kingdom, and that was to feed His sheep. There are three things implied in this commission. First: That Peter would meet *with the spiritually needy in his future course*. He would meet with hungry sheep and feeble lambs. The world abounds with those young, inexperienced, undisciplined, hungry souls. Secondly: That Peter would have at his disposal *suitable supplies for the needy*. He could not feed without food. The doctrines he had received from Christ would be food. Thirdly: That Peter had the *capacity so to present the supplies as to feed the hungry*. Here was his work, and love to Christ was the qualification for it. Nothing can qualify a man properly to help souls but love for Christ. Learning, genius, eloquence—all will not avail without this. This is the only true inspiration.

Hast thou this supreme love, not for the theological, but for the personal and historic Christianity, friend? Is He who trod the shores of Galilee and the mountains of Capernaum, who died upon the Cross and ascended to heaven, the centre point of thy soul? Is He the home of thy spirit? Dost thou live in Him? Art thou in Christ?

LONDON.

DAVID THOMAS, D.D.

NOTES ON THE EPISTLE OF JAMES.

“The Unbridled Tongue.”

Chapter i. 26, 27.—“IF ANY MAN AMONG YOU SEEM TO BE RELIGIOUS, AND BRIDLETH NOT HIS TONGUE, BUT DECEIVETH HIS OWN HEART, THIS MAN’S RELIGION IS VAIN. PURE RELIGION AND UNDEFILED BEFORE GOD AND THE FATHER IS THIS, TO VISIT THE FATHERLESS AND WIDOWS IN THEIR AFFLICTION, AND TO KEEP HIMSELF UNSPOTTED FROM THE WORLD.”

THESE two verses form the practical application of a sermon which, throughout, has every word of it been practical, and of which therefore it might reasonably have been thought no further application was required. If one has preached a discourse in which every paragraph has been burdened with exhortation and warning, in which every sentence has been a winged arrow, not shot at a venture, but with direct and pointed aim, is it not

Preachers sufficient to add: “these remarks have been practical
cannot be too throughout, and the hearer may be left to apply them
practical. for himself?” And yet, observe the apostle here.

His sermon has surely been practical enough; surely he had made sufficiently clear the difference between a “doer of the word” and a mere “hearer;” nobody could possibly miss his meaning, and everybody must be going away too absorbed in self-application to wonder how or how far it fitted his neighbour; each of them must have been too busily occupied in looking into that mirror which had been held before him, that perfect law of liberty into the which if he looked, and continued to look, he would experience for himself the blessing promised to all who so did. It might be so, very likely it was so; but it might not be so; and, lest the searching word may have failed to search some heart, he will speak the still more searching word, he will bring out the last test of life and character, and make it impossible for

any not to judge themselves ! “ You are a doer of the Word and not a hearer ? ” Make sure of this first : what about your self-restraint ? What about your power to bridle your tongue, and what about your power not to bridle the outgoings of the compassions of your heart ? Can you keep from saying bitter things ? can you not keep from saying kind things ? If you cannot keep from saying bitter things, well, you may think yourself very religious, you may be very zealous in all the outward activities of religion ; but “ if any man among you seem **The two-fold test.** to be religious and bridled not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man’s religion is vain ! ”

On the other hand, if you can keep from saying kind things, if you can see your brother have need and shut up your bowels of compassion from him, then again, no matter all your religious observances, you are a mere hearer, your religion is vain : for “ pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and the widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world. ”

A two-fold test whether a man is a doer of the Word, from the negative side, from the positive side : something he must keep himself from doing, something he must be eager to do.

I.—*First*, from the negative side a “ doer of the Word ” is one who does not say bitter things ; he does not give the reins to, he bridles his tongue. “ If any man,” &c.

The man who is religious here is one who is so in his own opinion. He may be this in the opinion of others as well, but it is his own opinion about himself the apostle is concerned with. The man says to himself,—I am very much interested in religious things, I neglect no religious observance, I am a truly religious man. This is his opinion about himself ; is it a correct one, and may he be classed among the “ Doers ? ” Possibly, but first of all let the Apostle’s test be applied. We must go close up to the **The Man is religious in his own opinion.** man, we must get behind his religious activities : we must get near enough to ask—What effect have all these upon his power to refrain from speaking bitterly with his tongue ! “ If any man among you,” &c. The Apostle lays great stress upon this test ; he recurs to it further

on in his epistle, and at great length; it is the test which, with him, searches most searchingly into the secret springs of the heart. If a man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man; if he cannot bridle his tongue, his religion is vain, and there is an end of it! Is not James too strict here, very narrow, fanatical even; and is not some allowance to be made for his strong language? Must not we tone it down, and shade it away into something like conformity with truth and soberness? Wait till we hear how we speak about the same thing! An ill-speaking person, a person who has never any good to say of anybody without a "but" after it which turns all his honey into gall, a person you dread to meet, for that some one's reputation is sure to suffer from the unbridled tongue: what do *we* think of such an one's religion? We think of it as James does, and we speak of it in even stronger terms than his! "If any man seem," &c., his religion is vain.

And all this is not remote from our lives, it is all as applicable to us as it was to the "twelve tribes scattered abroad." It is true these were very prone to the sins of the tongue, inclined to bitter wrangling, uncharitable, intolerant of opinions that did not in all points square with their own, not slow to express their intolerance, to pass off their gloomy suspicions as if they had been well-attested facts, to traduce the characters of those with whom they differed, and to think all the while they were doing God service! The Jews were peculiarly prone to sins of the tongue, and the Apostle's test was peculiarly fitted for them: shall we say it is not fitted for ourselves? Here is something which, perhaps, even we know something about. We have been crossed by some one in some of our schemes; we have been angered thereby, and, in our anger we have allowed ourselves to think unjustly of him. While in this mood, have we not said to others the unjust things we had been harbouring in our hearts, without letting it be known that the unjust things were but the ill-natured off-spring of our own ill-natured feelings! The next day, after the sun
 Application of the test. had gone down, and we had had the blessed hours of the divine darkness in which to see things more clearly, we would not have said what we did last night: but we said it, and

it will be repeated, and where the mischief of it may end who can tell? But suppose that all we thought about him had been quite correct; suppose that after an impartial review of his conduct, and from knowledge of all the facts of the case, our opinion was not unjust, was it a right thing, a Christian thing, was it not to trample upon the very spirit of religion itself, to go away out to the streets with it, and to proclaim it aloud in the hearing of every passer by? Suppose we knew something about a man which, if it were known, would grievously injure him, would it not need a very strong reason to justify us in telling it? If he were our brother, no power would drag it from us; we should move heaven and earth to keep it secret as the grave! What then? Is not this man, whom with a word we could consign to social disgrace, to cold averted looks, to poverty itself, is not this man so near to us as to have the right to the shelter of a brother; has he not the claim upon us signed and counter-signed by His hand Who said, "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them," that we shall

Why reveal what God conceals? befriend him, and cover him, and hide him in the dark and cloudy day? We should justly be held up to the execration of our fellow-men were we thus to lay bare what God has concealed, and for aught we know has forgiven and forgotten! The bridle of the tongue is three-ply: **The bridle is three-ply.** charitableness, the Golden Rule, Christian brotherliness; and if any man were to say of another,—"I'll say what I like about him, and I'll not be held back by the bit and the bridle of considerations of charity, of doing as I would be done by, of Christian brotherliness, he is but justifying the apostle's condemnation of him, a condemnation which at first-sight seems harsh, but to which in the hearing of this man's unbridled tongue we give in our hearty amen!

With this practical matter before us it becomes us to be practical. For example, you could say many a clever thing if you could but allow yourself to be bitter; you could be smart if you chose to be cruel; you might be brilliant if you could let yourself wound sensitive feelings. Which do you prefer, your jest to your friend; to say the clever, witty, sharp thing, though

it should cut to the quick, knowing it would cut to the quick, careless of the pain? or, to leave it unsaid, to consent to be **Heartless** thought common-place and dull rather than wound, **cleverness.** to let your clever jest die on your lips rather than leave the rankling sore? Do you put a bridle on your tongue when of your smart thing some one would otherwise go away saying it smarts? This commandment is exceeding broad. This test is quick and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword; it divides, lays bare, shows to be utterly irreligious some of those uses, abuses of the tongue which custom and thoughtlessness, and the contagion of evil example, have drugged us into imagining could harmonise and live with religious character and conduct. "Charity suffereth long and is kind, is not easily provoked, never faileth." "If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridlcth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain."

II.—*Second*, from the positive side. "Pure religion," &c. This is not the only form religion takes, but it is one of its forms, and that religion which, of all the forms it takes, never takes this one, is empty, profitless, vain. The substance of religion, the essence of it, is the soul's relation of, dependence upon, and obedience to God, and is one and the same in all circumstances; **Distinguish between the substance of religion and its forms.** the form, the outward expression of religion, varies in every circumstance, according to the special season or special need which calls it forth; and at one time "pure religion and undefiled" may utter itself in a psalm, at another in a kindly word to a stranger, at another in a visit to the lonely abode of the widow and the orphan. As the English words before us stand, pure religion seems to consist in visiting the fatherless and the widow, *as if this were the substance or essence of religion*: as it is in the original, it means that pure religion manifests itself in, takes on the form and expresses itself by such kindly and compassionate acts. As if the Apostle would say, the way to test your religion is to ask whether it puts on that form which is so dear to God's own heart,—God, who is the Father of the fatherless and the Judge of the widow. Pure religion is such love to God as draws and inclines a man to

compassionate what God compassionates. He pities the widow and the orphan; do you? If you are truly religious, if you are a doer of the word, this is the word to which you are joyfully conforming your life—"a Father of the fatherless and a Judge of the widow is God in His holy habitation."

It may be well in a word to vindicate the distinction between the substance of religion and this necessary manifestation of it in visiting the poor and needy, and for this reason; this text has been used as exhibiting a sufficiently exhaustive account of what religion is in its essence, whereas it is simply one test out of

Wrong
interpretation
of the
apostle's words

many by which essential religion is to be tested. Back of everything in the form of outcome of religion, a man says, I am a doer of the word, not a hearer only; I am religious. The Apostle replies, You are *religious*! You have *faith*! You *have been begotten* by the word of truth! The engrafted word *is saving* your soul! It is a vast profession, it is a solemn avowal! What if you should be mistaken? How important you should have an infallible test? Here is one, I declare it to you by the word of the Lord, it is the spirit of all Scripture, it is the mind of Christ, it commends itself to every compassionate heart: Does your religion send you out again and again from the comforts of your own home to brighten homes where no comfort is; to speak a word to him who is weary? "Hereby do we know that we love Him if we love the brethren. But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" and what of the reality or worth of his profession, "I am a doer of the word"?

The *substance* of religion had already been set forth by James in Faith and the New Birth; he is now but applying a particular test of it, and it is utterly wrong to speak of the test as if it were the substance. Let a man, any man, try to live the pure and undefiled religion here demanded, without those heavenly aids, without the infusion of that new life which is bestowed in Christ Jesus by His Spirit, and it will soon appear how vain and empty his religion will become.

1. The Apostle says *visit*, not *send* only! Send by all means when you cannot go yourself, but make sure that you visit, that **visit.** through your human presence you may bring to the sufferer the sense of the presence of the Divine. "How soon a smile of God can change the world!" Your words, your look, the pressure of the hand may be God's smile. Is it not well worth your visiting?

2. "Visit the fatherless and the widows in their affliction": the **visit all.** poor and the lonely ones? Yes, perhaps most so; but do not the sufferers who are not poor and lonely need comfort too? The Apostle's words are general, and our observing of them must be as general.

3. "Visit, and keep yourselves unspotted from the world." **visit, and** Visit and keep: not the one without the other: and **keep pure.** both rooted in Faith and the New Birth.

GLASGOW.

PETER RUTHERFORD.

THE TIDE OF SUCCESS.

"The tide is flowing up the great estuary, the boats are lying high and dry. At last a few ripples touch their keels. They begin to rock and sway, and at last, just as the tide is at the full, they are lifted free of the pebbles upon which they have been lying, and the men who are ready step in and sail out. If the man is not ready the tide drops, and the boat is left stranded, and the voyage cannot be accomplished. I hear the great incoming tide. I hear the rolling from the ocean of a Divine fulness of grace. Your keels are being kissed by these waters of Divine mercy and power. The boats are rising, are you ready to man them."—*Dr. Bevan.*

ROLLING AWAY STONES.

"Over the universal grave of the darkened soul there lies to-day the stone of Ignorance, of Prejudice, of Superstition. He hath put into your hands the lever that can lift the mighty incubus, and that lever is the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Now, He renews His call, 'Roll away the stone.'"—*Rev. Jackson Wray.*

Germes of Thought.

The Transfiguring Vision.

"BUT WE ALL, WITH OPEN FACE, BEHOLDING AS IN A GLASS THE GLORY OF THE LORD, ARE CHANGED INTO THE SAME IMAGE FROM GLORY TO GLORY, EVEN AS BY THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD."
—2 *Corinthians* iii. 18.

THE main drift of the context is to illustrate the frank openness and unreserve of the Christian ministry, as distinguished from the veiled, hidden, mystic character of the Jewish dispensation. The veil which once hid the shining face of Moses has now been transferred to the hearts of the Jewish people. They see no beauty in our Christ, no glory, because of the thick folds of prejudice, passion, and unbelief through which they gaze.

In sharp antithesis to this, we all—not a select few—but all, apostles and individual believers, with unveiled face, no longer needing veils of concealment to shroud the holy mysteries from view, "beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed," &c.

I.—THE MIRRORED GLORY. Adopting the rendering of the American revisers, "beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord," as the preferable one, on account of the implied contrast between the "hindered vision" of the fifteenth verse and the "unhindered, unobstructed vision" here, observe that the Gospel is likened to a burnished mirror in which we behold the "glory of the Lord."

Glory is the effulgence of light; the manifested perfection of moral character. When Moses prayed, "*I beseech Thee, shew me Thy glory,*" the answer of God was, "I will make all My goodness pass before thee." As if God had said, "My goodness, My tenderness, My pitifulness is My glory."

In the Gospel we have an exhibition of the blended righteousness and compassion of God; so it is called "the Gospel of the glory of

the blessed God." And since these attributes shine with softened splendour in Christ, it is called the "Gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God." For it is in the Incarnate God, our Brother, that we behold the "glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

Looking into the fourfold glass of the Gospel, to behold the "glory of the Lord," what do we see? A Divine Being, sharing the essential glory, emptying Himself of it, and assuming the garb of human flesh. First seen as a little child, folded in the arms, cherished in the bosom of a human mother. But unlike other babes, showing as He grows, no bias to evil, no tincture of sin; without blemish. Arrived at man's estate, His moral character has attained a symmetry, beauty, perfection transcending all ever seen, before or since. "He goes about doing good." Diseases flee at His touch. He weeps with them that weep, and rejoices with the glad. The timid, the sick, the poor, the outcast find in Him a protector and a friend. His is a goodness which attracts, not repels; draws hearts, as flowers are drawn towards the sun. All the duties of benevolence to man, of devotion to God He exemplified. "Cold mountains and the midnight air, witnessed the fervour of His prayer." The breath of calumny never dimmed the pure mirror of His life. At last, nailed to the tree of shame,—made "a curse" for us,—the force of self-sacrificing love could go no further. All other glories die eclipsed by reason of this "glory which excelleth." His is a glory, a perfection, not "faultily faultless," but eminently human and essentially Divine. In Him the unconscious prophecies of heathendom, sighing for a deliverer, are realised; the promises of a Messiah are fulfilled; the yearnings of the human heart for Divine sympathy are satisfied. He honours law, magnifies righteousness, expresses love. He atones God and man, harmonizes justice and mercy, heaven and earth. His birth, condescension; His life, goodness; His teaching, truth; His suffering, atonement; His death and resurrection, our pledge of victory; His session at God's right hand, the breakwater against the world's sin, the cause of the Church's progress; His second coming, the hope of every believing heart. What a constellation

of glory! And we may all behold it. Like the famous fresco in the ceiling of the cathedral, which was brought within easy reach by reflecting mirrors on the floor. We could not all be contemporaries of the living Jesus. If we had been, we might have had our spiritual perceptions blunted, veiled, like the Jews. But now, in the fourfold biography, we may all at our leisure behold the glory of the Lord.

II.—THE TRANSFIGURING VISION. By beholding we are changed. In the very act of looking we are "*metamorphosed*." The same Greek word used to describe the transfiguration of Christ. We also are transfigured as we gaze. Mind and character become luminous. Beauty born of that communion doth sometimes pass into the face, as we have seen the very countenance of the ripe saint apparelled in celestial light.

Some gaze and are not changed. They have never so felt the evil of sin, the "plague of their own hearts," as to put the whole soul into a look. Their's is only a surface—a transient splendour. Like the face of Moses,—when God's glory smote him on the face, the skin of his face shone; but it soon faded away. And he put the veil on his face every time he came out of the tabernacle, in order that the people might not see how brief and evanescent the splendour was. It was an emblem of the transiency of his economy. So multitudes of hearers have their minds filled with Christian truth, their thoughts saturated with Biblical ideas, but they do not gaze so long, so fixedly, so lovingly, as to experience the interior and radical transformation.

Others gaze and are changed. Their hearts sensitive to the touch of truth, like the plate in the camera, to the pencil of the sun. Flinging away obscuring veils, and fixing the steadfast gaze on Jesus, they are transfigured. They share the excellence which they behold, reflect the glory they see, shine in the beauty which has won their hearts.

This change is *moral*; by the well-known law of our inner life, according to which we came to resemble what we love. Love to the Lord Jesus makes us like Him: and our likeness is in proportion to the intensity of our gaze. Newton said that he differed from other men only in the power of attention. What

makes Christians differ from others and from one another is, mainly, in the habit of contemplating Divine truth long enough to allow it to produce its proper effect. Keeping ourselves in the attitude of receptivity, the eye of the soul fixed on His glorious beauty, all channels of communion free and unobstructed, we are changed into the moral likeness of the Lord.

This change is *gradual, progressive*, "from glory to glory," &c., not instantaneous. The initial change may be the work of a moment; the complete process is the work of a life-time. Sometimes we may be standing still, sometimes going backward; sometimes ploughing the pathless deep, with neither sun nor star in all our sky; but if we are true pilgrims of light, our path, like the shining light, will shine more and more until the perfect day. He who sits above the "moon-led waters white" will turn the storm into a calm, and show all things working for our good. At length death will come "and trample into fragments the dome of many-coloured glass which stains the white radiance of eternity," but it will be that we may awake from the dream of life, "satisfied in His likeness."

Comforting thought to those who grow weary and disheartened after painful struggles to reach an ideal goodness which ever seems to elude their grasp. Here is a message fitted to brace every sinew of the soul with resistless might. Cease from working; sit still and look; let His image sweetly creep into the eye and prospect of your soul. Get near to Christ; study His character; be not content with hearsay knowledge; seek a quiet hour with Jesus. Get to know where the Master dwells, and the likeness will grow; a mere daub now—a rough sketch—it will be clothed with winsomeness and grace; your every thought, word, deed, taking tone, colour, and form from your living Lord. "In quietness and confidence shall be your strength."

III.—ITS GREAT AUTHOR. "*The Lord the Spirit.*" When the veil of unbelief is taken away, the Lord Himself obtains access to the heart, and imparts Himself. Where He is, there too is His gracious Substitute—the Holy Ghost, the Comforter. He alone effects the marvellous transformation. He takes the things of Christ and shows them unto us. He supplies the needed

illumination. He reveals the saving sight, removes obscuring veils, purges the spiritual perceptions, and dwells within as source of the transfiguring and assimilative power. "If ye being evil," &c., "*how much more* will your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him," that He may change "from glory to glory."

APPLICATION.—1. Have you gazed and are you conscious of the beginnings of this gracious transfiguration? Then reflect the light; let the world see Christ mirrored in your life. If you cannot speak for Christ, let your life be luminous and your example eloquent. Men will see on your face the mirrored glory, like "thy martyr, Stephen," who shone like face of an angel, because His look was fixed beyond all shadows upon the Heavenly Reality—the Exalted Lord at the right hand of the Throne. So men will take knowledge of you that you have been with Jesus.

2. Have you gazed and are not changed? Your position critical; your privilege great. Men's eyes are being turned away from fossil dogmas to Him who is "the Life indeed." One man says, "*Ecce Homo*," another "*Ecce Deus*." The Press is very prolific in new studies of that peerless life. Do not miss the vision of that Face. Your responsibility is augmented by the abundance of Gospel light. You cannot too soon secure the marvellous transfiguration. Wait till eternity dawns and the vision may transfix into stony despair.

BRISTOL.

ALEXANDER WILSON, B.A.

"He who would benefit mankind on a comprehensive scale, by changing the principles and elements of society, must learn the hard lesson—to put off self and to contribute by a quiet but incessant activity, like a rill of water, to irrigate and fertilise the intellectual soil."—*Godwin*.

"Man is a reasonable animal, it is true, but not in the bulk; it is the individual who does duty for the community; for the fools in every age are in a majority."—*Barnett Smith*

“Fools” and “Wise.”

A SERMON FOR YOUNG MEN AND YOUNG WOMEN.

“SEE THEN THAT YE WALK CIRCUMSPECTLY, NOT AS FOOLS, BUT AS WISE, REDEEMING THE TIME, BECAUSE THE DAYS ARE EVIL.”—*Ephesians* v. 15, 16.

“FOOLS” and “wise.” These are the two great classes into which the apostle divides mankind,—into which mankind may be divided now.

I.—A WISE YOUNG MAN WILL ADDRESS HIMSELF TO THE HIGHEST WORK OF LIFE. Am I right? But what is the highest work of life—that which the wise young man makes his supreme concern, and that for which he earnestly strives day by day, year in and year out? Let us reply by asking another question. What is the highest, greatest thing in man? I shall carry your judgment with me when I say his *character*. The true estimate of a man is his character. The true joy of a man is his character. The true service of a man is his character. In a word, character is *the man, the woman*. Am I right in thus placing character in the forefront of man's life,—in regarding it as the one essential for an eminent, happy, useful, noble, royal life here, and a happy and glorious life hereafter, and so as the highest, greatest thing in man? I feel assured that I carry your judgment with me. Well then does it not follow that the highest work of life, and so that to which the wise young man will address himself, is the fullest development—the highest perfection of character possible? Is that the work to which you have addressed yourself? Now I want to show you that this development—perfection of character—is “the *salvation* which we have in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.” And so that the highest work of life, that to which the wise young man will address himself, is “to work out his own salvation.” When the earnest, anxious, thoughtful young man sends to heaven the agonizing cry, “What must I do to be saved?” does he mean salvation from some hell of fire and brimstone, chains and darkness by and by? And when we

point him to the “Lord Jesus Christ” and say, “Believe on Him and thou shalt be saved,” is salvation from *that* all we mean? God forbid that we should reduce the “salvation” for which Christ endured that death sorrow of soul—drank that bitter cup—died that shameful death, to any such narrow or meagre proportions. Is that the highest, noblest end and work of life to which we are to stimulate, urge the wise young man to address himself? A thousand times No! Every representation of the salvation of the Gospel that does not make character the one essential factor in it, is a misrepresentation of that salvation. *Salvation of character* is “*the one thing needful*”; its *right formation—successful development—highest perfection,—“that good part which shall not be taken away from us.”* Salvation from the gnawing worm of *present* remorse—the burning fire of *present* guilt—the dark hell of *present* sin—and a pressing on to the largest acquisitions of truth—the intensest emotions of love—the holiest throbbings of virtue—the noblest resolves of rectitude, and so to the full glory and measure of his manhood, until God, looking down from heaven and seeing in him once more His own glorious image and likeness reflected, shall say of him with a Divine, unutterable complacency, “This is my beloved son (daughter), in whom I am well pleased.” Are you addressing yourself to the working out of this salvation? What does the mirror say as to your wisdom or foolishness?

II.—A WISE YOUNG MAN WILL EMPLOY THE BEST MEANS TO ACCOMPLISH THAT WORK. Am I right? Let us look a little in detail at the work to which the wise young man will address himself—the highest development—perfection of character, and then we shall be in a position to judge as to the best means he can employ to accomplish it.

1.—*He must educate his mind.* You have a mind of amazing capabilities. The mind of the maiden may be different in some respects from that of the young man, but both are capable of almost illimitable enlargement—immeasurable enrichment. Do not think you will reach the highest end of life with a little contracted mind—a poverty-stricken intellect. The possibility of your life is a large, grand, rich mind, a mighty keen, powerful

intellect. You must enrich your mind, then, with all holy truth—for all truth is holy—it has God for its source and centre; you must enlarge it with all valuable knowledge, so that you may be able to understand and to converse on all right subjects—for all right subjects have God in them. You must exercise your reason, discipline your judgment, that your mind may be well, evenly balanced, so that you may rightly use and dispose of the knowledge that you acquire, and converse intelligently with and to the profit of others. You must strive after force of thought in the intellect, correctness of opinion in the judgment, opulence of knowledge in the mind. And what are the best means you can employ to accomplish this? Do not suppose that we disparage or under-value other means when we say, with emphasis,—a devout and thoughtful study of God's Word, *especially of the teachings of Christ*. In the teachings of Christ you will find words that are nuggets of gold, sentences that are volumes of instruction, sayings that are repertoires of wisdom, truths that are seed-grains of harvests of knowledge. Christ has quickened and enriched the mind of man by flooding the world with light which no human power can darken—by furnishing earth's library with stores of truth which no time can exhaust, by presenting God to it in His noblest character, grandest purposes, most intimate, all-endearing relations as its most quickening, purifying, ennobling subject for devout thought and loving study. What subjects for devout thought and study do the teachings of Christ present! "The mind of Christ;" we want you to have that. The mind of the world is something more now than it was when Christ came. It is now the mind of man *plus* "the mind of Christ." Do we not carry your judgment with us, then, when we say that one of the best means to accomplish the highest work of life is to educate the mind by a devout and thoughtful study of God's Word, *especially of the teachings of Christ*?

2. *He must cultivate his heart.* You have a heart of almost an unlimited power of affection. The heart of the maiden may be different in its affections in some respects from that of the young man, but both are capable of almost interminable enlargement, infinite expansion. Do not think you will reach the

highest end of life with a cold, selfish, nutshell heart. The possibility of your life is a great heart, intense affection, world-wide love, and you will not attain the highest end of life until you get that. And so you must give full scope and exercise to all your powers of affection and benevolence; not shut them up in some narrow sphere, contracted circle; you must let them expand, and widen and widen until they become world-wide in their sympathies, and enfold all mankind in their embrace. Your heart has mighty powers of love, unlimited energies of affection. Give them room to grow—enlarge—expand; exercise them upon your parents, brothers and sisters, relatives and friends. The more they are exercised the stronger, larger, mightier, will they grow. Strive after a loving nature—to be baptised in a spirit of love—enveloped in an atmosphere of love—strong in the energy of love. And now, what are the best means you can employ to accomplish this? Here again do not suppose that we disparage or undervalue other means when we say, with emphasis,—A devout and thoughtful study of God’s Word, and *especially of the life of Christ*. In the life of Christ you see the softnesses—the tendernesses—the energy—the potency—the glory—the perfection of love; the heights, depths, lengths, breadths of “a love that passeth knowledge.” “*The heart of Christ*,” we want you to have that. “*The love of Christ*,” we want you to have that. The heart of the world is something more now than it was when Christ came. It is now the heart of man *plus* the heart of Christ. Yes, Christ expanded the heart of the world—enlarged the heart of humanity, by living a life of love, of benevolence, of disinterestedness, such as the world had never seen; a love and benevolence that stooped to the lowest—embraced the whole race of man—burned on, in spite of the thousand extinguishing influences to which it was exposed, with an unquenchable flame. He presented God to the heart in the most attractive form—endearing relation—melting, but soul-drawing attitude, as the object of its deepest, strongest interest, supremest love. “Do we not carry your judgment with us then,” &c.?

3.—*He must discipline his will*. You have a will of almost unlimited power of resolve and action. “I will.” Think how

invincible is the spirit which has the strength to say, "I will." "I will,"—who can measure the height, depth, length, breadth, circumference, for good or for evil, that that utterance expresses? Left to itself the will is like a restive horse full of mettle, but frequently wild and unmanageable. You must bring it into subjection by wise discipline. Mark, do not break it, do not degrade it; but control, govern, strengthen it. Do not rest until you can so curb and master it that it will endure and obey the rein. Then with invincible determination you will be able to choose and perform the right. With a quiet spirit you will be able to resist the sorest temptation, both from within and from without—bear with cheerfulness and resignation the heaviest crosses—maintain an unbroken calm while the wildest tempest rages, and stand fearless and bold under the menaces and frowns of your fellow men. And now what are the best means you can employ to accomplish this? Here, again, do not suppose that we disparage or undervalue other means when we say, with emphasis, a devout and thoughtful study of God's Word, *especially of the obedience of Christ*. In the obedience of Christ you see the strongest, mightiest will in the universe, but a will that could be "obedient unto death,"—a will that could be brought into the completest subjection. Here is its final utterance,—“Father, not My will, but Thine be done.” *The will of Christ*,—we want you to have that. The will of the world is something more now than it was when Christ came. It is now the will of man *plus* the will of Christ. Yes, Christ strengthened the universal will of man by living a life of spotless purity, righteousness, immaculate holiness and trust; by resisting the most subtle temptations, battling with the most powerful influences, withstanding the keenest shafts of ridicule and obloquy, trampling the world beneath His feet, marching on amid the storms that raged around Him, and the insults that He received, with quiet strength, undaunted spirit, to the completion of His sublime and glorious work, leaving behind Him an inspiration, a heroism, that must nerve His loving subjects and faithful followers to endure any sacrifice rather than swerve from truth, righteousness, holiness, love, and secure to them a triumphant victory over every foe. Do we not carry your

judgment with us then, &c. ? And now, are you employing these threefold means to accomplish the highest work of life, &c. What does this three-sided mirror say as to your wisdom or foolishness, &c. ?

III.—A WISE YOUNG MAN WILL MAKE SURE THE SUCCESS OF HIS WORK BY “REDEEMING THE TIME.” Am I right ? When is the best time ? Now ! With trumpet clang the injunction of the apostle comes breaking upon your ears to-night—young man—woman,—“Redeem the time.” How ? By improving every opportunity, and availing yourself of every help for devoutly, thoughtfully studying the Word of God, *especially the teachings, life, and the obedience of Christ*. In addition to your home studies, attend the services of God’s house, both on the Sunday and on the week-day evening ; attend Bible classes where the Word is expounded and explained, especially the classes in connection with your own school and place of worship. Prize the advantages these offer. Make a point never to be late or absent from them. Prepare for them, make them as interesting and as profitable as you are able. Stimulate your teachers by your presence, enquiries, contributions. *Make them* study and think for your benefit, nothing will give them greater pleasure or encouragement. Are you making sure the success of your work by “redeeming the time” ? What does this mirror say as to your wisdom or foolishness ?

We preach Jesus to you as the Saviour from foolishness. All sin is folly, and if all folly is not sin it is bordering closely upon it. Now gather up all the energies of your nature into one grand, life-long effort, and “leaving the things that are behind, press forward.”

POPLAR.

BENJAMIN PREECE.

“THE DEFINITION OF A LIE.—A lie consists in expressing ourselves purposely in a manner not any ways significant of our real thoughts, though the person we are speaking to has a right to understand them, and we on our part lie under an obligation of making him apprehend our meaning.”—*Poffendorf*.

Sin—Conflict with—Victory over.

“FOR I DELIGHT IN THE LAW OF GOD AFTER THE INWARD MAN : BUT I SEE ANOTHER LAW IN MY MEMBERS, WARRING AGAINST THE LAW OF MY MIND, AND BRINGING ME INTO CAPTIVITY TO THE LAW OF SIN WHICH IS IN MY MEMBERS. O WRETCHED MAN THAT I AM ! WHO SHALL DELIVER ME FROM THE BODY OF THIS DEATH ? I THANK GOD THROUGH JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD. SO THEN WITH THE MIND I MYSELF SERVE THE LAW OF GOD ; BUT WITH THE FLESH THE LAW OF SIN.”—*Romans* vii. 22-25.

WE have in these words:—

I.—PAUL'S EXPERIENCE.

1. *That there were within himself two conflicting principles.* “I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind.” Commentators, both ancient and modern, have been divided in opinion as to whether Paul was here speaking of himself, or imagining a case for the sake of argument. The latter seems wholly inadmissible, and deprives this powerful passage of its force and meaning. The majority of divines agree that Paul spake of himself, and described what he experienced in his own soul ; but they differ as to the period in the apostle's religious history at which he passed through the trying ordeal he so graphically described. Some think he referred to the period prior to his conversion. But how could an unconverted man say, “I *delight* (συνήδομαι) in the law of God.” Others think that this was his experience during the time of his blindness, after meeting our Lord, and before Ananias was sent to him (Acts ix. 8, 17). But only three days elapsed while he was in that state, and surely his exceptional experience during that short period would not be of much value to the Christians at Rome, nor to believers generally. *Before* his conversion Paul “was alive without the law” (v. 9). *At* his conversion “the commandment came, sin revived, and he *died*” (v. 9). With the first dawns of grace he could say, “I *consent* (σύμφημι) unto the law that it is good.” As he grew stronger and saw more of

the love and graciousness of the Divine Lawgiver he could say, "I *delight* in the law of God after the inward man." But the more clearly the Divine light shone upon him, the more conspicuously did his own failings and sins stand out before him. And he became ill-at-ease with himself, and dissatisfied with his own accomplishments. Christianity with Paul was a *life* as well as a creed. His experience has been that of thousands of believers in all ages. Although some, like "holy Mr. Gifford," of Bedford, find peace at once and retain it until death; others, like "John Bunyan," and the "Pilgrim" he immortalised, find they need the "sword" constantly in hand as well as the "trowel."

2. *That these principles were under the direction of opposing Intelligences.*—"WARRING," (*ἀντιστρατεύόμενον*—*taking the field, making war against*). The conflict is not a collision between blind forces; but is a *warfare*. In every *war* there is *intelligence* on both sides. The "law of the mind" is under the direction of the "Captain" of our salvation. That of "the members"—of "the old man"—of "the flesh"—is under the direction of Apollyon—the adversary—the old serpent, which is the devil. The "Holy War" in the "Town of Man-Soul" is more than a poetic dream.

3. *That the tendency of sin is to make men slaves to itself: "and bringing me into captivity," &c.* Grace makes for freedom—"the glorious liberty of the children of God." Sin aims at mastery over the mind, heart, and actions of men. "Every one that committeth sin is the *bond-servant* of sin."—*R. V.* When sin is indulged in for a length of time the power of resistance is weakened, and man becomes the helpless prey—the easy victim of the foe. The most pitiful, and perhaps most pitiable, object on earth is a man under the power of some evil habit which he has allowed to obtain the mastery over him. Witness:—The Miser, the Sensualist, the Opium Eater, the Drunkard, &c., &c. The grasp of sin is a tenacious one. It rallies, too, after many a defeat, and clings with deadly obstinacy oftentimes to those most "valiant for the truth." The apostle, though free from its dominion, was painfully exposed to its attacks, keenly sensitive to its wounds, and sorely grieved at its tenacity and virulence.

He felt it was not to be trifled with, though he had been a believer in Christ twenty or twenty-five years when he wrote this epistle !

II.—PAUL'S EMOTIONS IN THE FACE OF HIS EXPERIENCES.

1. *He felt wretched.* "O wretched man that I am !" Whatever reading we adopt of these words the meaning is not much altered, and the conviction is pressed upon us that the apostle, by keeping his eye fixed on the enemy, felt his whole nature give way, and experienced that sense of wretchedness which a long, bitter, protracted, mortal struggle produces in the mind of the sorely-tried and hard-pressed combatant.

2. *He felt himself to be loathsome.* "*The body of this death.*" Sin was as hateful to the apostle as a corpse is repulsive to living men. It was a "body of death" to him. Something hateful, accursed, repugnant, *loathsome* !

3. *He felt helpless.* "Who shall *deliver* me ?" The longer he gazes on the foe the more formidable it appears. And upon reviewing his defeats in the past he feels as if in the grasp of a mighty giant, he is powerless and helpless, and in agony cries out for help and deliverance.

4. *He felt hopeless.* There seems to be the wail of despair in the whole verse. "*Who shall,*" &c. Weary with the constant conflict, sick at the thought of being burdened with a loathsome "body of death," powerless to deliver himself from this horrid antagonist, a momentary cloud has crossed his sky—his brain darkens—his nature reels—his courage wavers—his hope staggers, and the darkness of despair sets in ! But faith hastes to the rescue, and his vision is directed both from self and the foe. And we perceive—

III.—PAUL'S DELIVERANCE.

"I thank God," &c. It is often asserted that the darkest hour is nearest the dawn. It was so here ; and frequently is so in Christian experience. While Paul was possessed with a feeling of wretchedness, loathsomeness, helplessness, and hopelessness, which he never experienced in the face of persecutions and sufferings in the discharge of his apostolic duties, the light

dawned upon him and he again caught sight of the way of deliverance. It was—

1. *From God.* “I thank God.” “Who shall deliver me?” God. God alone is able. “Who *can* forgive sins but God?” It is He only who giveth us the victory, &c.

2. *Through Jesus Christ our Lord.* Paul knew of no way whereby God saves from sin but “through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Paul did not divide the Christ. The Man Christ Jesus was Mediator between God and men to Paul. To him He was also “God over all, blessed for evermore.” The life of obedience and the death of suffering were factors in the scheme of redemption. So also was the resurrection from the dead and the ascension into glory. If he hoped for mercy it was from God, “through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

If a *good moral life* were sufficient the apostle could plead, “touching the righteousness which is of the law, blameless.” If *mental culture* delivered from sin, who more cultured than himself. Witness his speech at Areopagus (Acts xvii.). If *zeal for the cause of God* could secure deliverance, see 2 Corinthians xi. None of these does he plead, and in nothing does he hope, but in “GOD THROUGH OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.”

IV.—PAUL’S INFERENCE FROM THE WHOLE. “So then with the mind,” &c. Victory is at hand. The enemy is routed from the citadel.

1 *The better part of his nature—the immortal part—was in the service of God.*

2. *Only the inferior part—the mortal members of the flesh—were in any sense in the service of sin.* “So then with the mind *I myself* (αὐτὸς ἐγὼ)” however paradoxical, or even illogical, it may appear to the inexperienced—“*I myself* serve the law of God, and with the flesh the law of sin.” Soon the victory would be complete, and the body also brought into subjection to the law of Christ.

For encouragement I would ask all who have been interested in reviewing Paul in the midst of the conflict, to follow him to the end of his career, and behold him victorious over sin, the flesh, and the devil—triumphantly shouting, “I am now ready to

be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. *I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith*; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day, and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing." "Thanks be unto God who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ."—Amen.

ABERDARE.

R. T. HOWELL.

The Four Winds.

"COME FROM THE FOUR WINDS, O BREATH."—*Ezekiel* xxxvii. 9.

THE winds are emblems of strong, strange forces. Jesus Christ, who interpreted to us the life of the bird and of the flower, as they never would have been understood but for Him, interprets to us the wind, and makes the zephyr and the hurricane alike in their viewless mysterious courses, types of the presence and power of the Spirit of God.

First, let us think of the winds themselves, and afterwards of such forces as they seem to illustrate.

I.—THE WINDS, THEIR OPERATION AND PURPOSE. The *variety of the influence of the winds* is as wide as you can describe. It would be impossible to exaggerate this influence in the vast apparatus we call the natural world. Science would rival Poetry in the recital of what the winds have done, are doing, can do in the material realm,—nay, even in the intellectual and moral realm also; for bodily health unspeakably affects mind and spirit, and the quarter whence the wind blows affects the condition of lungs, nerves, and livers of myriads of men, and so affect their manners and moods, and even their religion, more than many like to confess. All this we see. But he who gets at the back of the winds finds, not simply this manifold variety of operation, but *one great purpose*, a purpose not to be judged by their workings

in some limited area, or on some one class of life. He will not only understand how Charles Kingsley could utter an Ode to the North East Wind—

“Bracing brain and sinew,
Blow, thou wind of God,”

but will know that the pious soul who bravely believes in God, who has the winds in His fists, can say to every wind in its season—“Blow, thou wind of God.”

II.—SOME OF THE FORCES TYPIFIED BY THE WINDS, and *their* operation and purpose. *Events and circumstances that are joyful find their emblem in some winds.* Prosperity in health, in home, love, business, study, fortunate events, are like the “south wind blowing softly.” These winds are not the children of chance, but the messengers of God. *Events and circumstances that are saddening find their emblem in some winds.* Severe bodily pain, family anxiety, bereavement, business cares, poverty, are like the blowing of the north and north-east winds. They, no more than soft and genial winds are the children of chance, but “stormy wind fulfilling His Word.” Get behind these winds. Here is a man who has been *before* them—beaten upon by fiercest gales—in labours, prisons, strifes, death, &c. Now he is *behind* these winds, he has heard their secret—“All things work together for good to those that love God.” Yes, *that* is the teaching; “*all things.*” The whole circle of the circumstances and experiences of life are like the combination of the influences of all the *four* winds. Each is right in its season; each has its own function that no other could fulfil. A tree beaten upon by one wind only becomes twisted and deformed. Yet again, and chiefly, *the great Force of all Forces, Life of all Lives is typified, in the best influence that comes from all the winds.* Behind the winds and above them the Spirit of Christ comes to us if we will but give Him place. Whether in such sudden storm of keen north-east as when He came to Saul of Tarsus, or in exquisitely tender zephyr as when John, the Beloved, confessed, “We have seen the Messiah,” matters not; but that, somehow, that Spirit should come to us is of infinite matter.

EDITOR.

The Divine Perfection and Our's.

"BE YE THEREFORE PERFECT, EVEN AS YOUR FATHER WHICH IS IN HEAVEN IS PERFECT."—*Matt. v. 48.*

WHETHER we regard these words as a command or an exhortation, we may be sure that they had a real and definite meaning, and that we must not overlook them or put them aside as visionary and impracticable, for they are the words of Him who is our only guide in the way that leadeth to everlasting life; they are the words of Him who never wasted instructions, who never misleads His people.

I.—THIS COMMAND IS VERY DIFFICULT TO OBEY FULLY.

In our own strength we cannot do this. But God never enjoins a duty without supplying grace for its fulfilment. The world is full of distractions, deceits, temptations. Let us start in life ever so hopefully, and with all desire to live as becomes our high calling, we find ourselves often entangled, pressed down, drawn aside, and thus content ourselves with a much lower standard than we had at first proposed. We cannot do the things that we would, "*The world is too much with us,*" &c.; and so when we examine these words closely we say, how far above us is this precept! To attain *perfection*, to be perfect as God is, we must be content with no lower standard than that of our Heavenly Father, the holiness of the Everlasting God! And yet, if we be *indeed* children of the Heavenly King, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ, it is surely meet, right, and our bounden duty, to try to live in accordance with that relationship.

In earthly families we find that children take great pride in the illustrious deeds of their ancestors. The trophies of their prowess become monuments of the family glory. The traits, marks of noble character, are carefully recorded for after generations, and hence are derived both power and influence in the world (*among men*). This may help us to understand how

our Lord *appeals to us as children of God*. A very definite and most sacred bond of union exists between the people of Christ and their Father in heaven—the Creator and Preserver of us all. This bond has been made by Christ, in whom God reconciled the world to Himself, and who is the One Mediator. It is the most holy, the most vital, and the dearest of all relations. The lofty and holy standard of life and conduct held forth to us in the text may seem to some to be wholly beyond the reach of feeble, tempted, and fallen men. To be perfect as our Father in heaven may well seem impossible to us

“Frail children of dust,
And feeble as frail,”

for the greatest of God’s chosen servants have stood abashed at the revelation of His holiness and power. Who then is sufficient for these things? The answer must come from above “My grace is sufficient for thee.” “Without Me ye can do nothing.” Let us, then, not regard the words of Christ as expressing alone the great necessity of a high and holy pattern for those who only desire to go on from the first principles of faith and practice to perfection.

II.—THIS COMMAND BECOMES PRACTICABLE BY VIRTUE OF THE UNION EXISTING BETWEEN CHRIST AND HIS PEOPLE.

“Because I live, ye shall live also,” are the Saviour’s words to those who follow Him, and the encouragement given to us to work out our own salvation is this, *that it is God who worketh in us both to will and to do His pleasure*. It is impossible for us to imitate the *power* of the Almighty, or to *attain* to His infinite wisdom, His all-pervading presence, His awful purity, or His boundless love; yet, undoubtedly, as Holy Scripture teaches us, we may imitate our Heavenly Father in Holiness, in forgiving injuries, in loving truth, in seeking peace, in doing good. We are to be followers of God as dear children, because God has given to us the Spirit of adoption; because He has sent His Spirit into our hearts; otherwise, it would indeed have been hard for us to become followers of Him. Now we

find that special stress is laid on our imitating our Heavenly Father *in showing mercy*. Mercy to others is made the condition of our own forgiveness in more than one passage of Scripture. How admirably is the free mercy of God shown in the parable of the Good Samaritan. Is there anyone that has injured or insulted you, or towards whom circumstances have made you prejudiced?—that is the opportunity for showing love and mercy *truly Divine*; for in showing kindness to those who seem to have no claim on you, you are truly followers of Him who continually pours His blessings on the unthankful and unjust that they may be drawn to repentance and life.

GRANGE OVER SANDS.

SAMUEL BARBER.

A TRACT—A SEED.

“A TRACT is a seed, a vital particle, that, deposited and diffused, will produce appropriate fruit. It is not truth in a great mass, but it follows all the analogies of nature in all departments of her operations. A tract is not too weighty to be carried; it is not too bulky to be deposited; it may be carried anywhere; it may be deposited almost anywhere. We know that the seeds of plants and of flowers are carried by the birds of the air, are carried even by the breezes of heaven from one island and from one continent to another; they are deposited in most unlikely places, in crevices of rocks, on mountain sides, in places untrodden by the foot of man, and so an unsuspected vegetation springs up in places that have received no ministry from human hand. So it is with a tract.”—ARCHBISHOP BENSON.

RELIGION AND JUSTICE.

“RELIGION is the expression of the Divine mind, and, however little our feeble vision may be able to discern the means by which God may provide for its preservation, we may leave the matter in His hands, and we may be sure that a firm and courageous application of every principle of justice is the best way for the preservation and maintenance of religion.”—GLADSTONE.

SEEDS OF SERMONS ON THE SECOND BOOK OF
THE KINGS.

The Death of Elisha.

“IN THE THREE AND TWENTIETH,” &c.—II. *Kings* xiii.

THE Book of Kings is, for the most part, a record of crime, and of crime of the most heinous and aggravated character. The terrible monstrosities recorded are ascribable, directly or indirectly, to Kings. In this very chapter we have a sketch of two of those monarchs—and their name is legion—who have been the greatest curses of their race. Jehoahaz, son and successor of Jehu, King of Israel, whose reign was disastrous to the kingdom to such a degree that his army was all but utterly destroyed, and had become like the dust on the “threshing floor.” And Jehoash, who for three years was associated with his father in the government, when his father was swept away was a curse to the world and reigned sixteen years. The only portion of this chapter

worth noticing is from verse fourteen to verse twenty-one. These verses present to us four subjects of thought, a great man dying, a good man leaving the world interested in posterity, a wicked man regretting the event, and a dead man exerting a wonderful influence.

I.—A GREAT MAN DYING.
“Now Elisha was fallen sick of his sickness whereof he died.” The whole history of Elisha is not only the history of the marvellous but the history of loyalty to Heaven and devotion to the interests of his race. But here we find this great and good man dying. Elijah, his master, had escaped death and had been borne to Heaven in a chariot of fire, but Elisha had to die in the ordinary “way of” mankind, through sickness. “Elisha was fallen sick of his sickness

whereof he died." It is true he was an old man, three score years had passed since he commenced his prophetic ministry. For a great many years we are told nothing about him, but no doubt he had been actively and usefully engaged. Even the most useful public men and the most popular, too, cease to attract great public attention as they pass into years. Often they become as "dead men out of sight," albeit they are useful. Though all men have to die, death is not the same to all men. It has a widely different significance to different men. To the good man it is life breaking through exuviae and taking wing to revel in a sunny universe. It is the "mortal putting on immortality." Here we have—

II.—A WICKED MAN REGRETTING THE EVENT. "And Joash the King of Israel came down unto him and wept over his face, and said, O my father, my father." Why did he weep? Not because he had any sympathy with the character of the departing man. His moral sympathies were in antagonism to those

of the prophet. Not because he felt that the event would injure the prophet himself. He must have known the reverse. The prophet might have said to him, "If ye love me ye would rejoice;" but because he knew that the event would be a loss to the living in general. He cared nothing for his race, not he; but because he knew that the prophet was the "Chariot of Israel and the horseman thereof." His chariots and horsemen were gone, and Elisha was his only hope. Here we have—

III.—A GOOD MAN LEAVING THE WORLD INTERESTED IN POSTERITY. Elisha, though dying, was excited to some interest in the future of his country. "Elisha said unto him, Take bows and arrows. And he took unto him bows and arrows." (Verse 15-19.) He here seems to be touched by the king's tears, and held out the hope that he would yet become victorious over the Syrians. The symbolic action which the prophet recommended, putting his hand upon the bow, opening the window, shooting the arrow,

smiting the ground, does not, I think, necessarily mean that the prophet approved of the future wars of the kings, but merely indicated the fact. He foretold his success; for, in three campaigns against the Syrians, he recovered the cities which they had taken from his father. He was also successful in the war with Amaziah, king of Judah.

But the point worth notice is, the interest felt in the future by the prophet in his dying hours. Had he not done with life? Would he not soon be in his grave? What would the world be to him in the future? An interest in posterity seems to be an instinct in humanity. There is a nerve in humanity that runs through all races and all generations, linking men together. "No man liveth to himself;" all men are in one. The more moral goodness a man has in him the more sensitive this nerve becomes. Hence the best men in all ages have been the men who made provisions for posterity. Here we have—

IV.—A DEAD MAN EXERTING A WONDERFUL INFLUENCE. "It

came to pass, as they were burying a man, that, behold, they spied a band of men; and they cast the man into the sepulchre of Elisha: and when the man was let down, and touched the bones of Elisha, he revived, and stood up on his feet." The incident which takes place in his grave is as strange as it is significant and suggestive. The bearers of a dead man struck with terror at the approach of enemies in their way, instead of carrying the remains to their appointed resting-place, left them to fall into the sepulchre, where slept the bones of the illustrious Elisha. No sooner did the corpse touch the sacred reliques of the great seer than it quivered with life, and the dead man, to the astonishment of all, revived, and stood on his feet. This miraculous incident was designed and calculated to make a wholesome moral impression on the mind of the age. It had a tendency to demonstrate to all, the divinity of the prophet's mission, to show the honour with which the Eternal treats the holy dead, to prove the existence of a power superior to death, and

to preshadow a future state. Whilst I would at all times studiously endeavour to avoid the sin of what is called spiritualising God's Word, I feel that it is lawful to use an incident like this as an illustration of spiritual realities. The incident which occurred in the grave of Elisha on this occasion, viz.:—the deriving of life by contact with the holy dead, is, in the material depart-

ment of things to which it belongs, sublimely singular. Such an event as this, perhaps, will never occur again; but a thing analogous to this in the spiritual domain is, thank God, of frequent occurrence. The dead minds of earth are constantly deriving life from contact with the spiritual remains of the dead.

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SEEDS OF SERMONS ON THE EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS.

The Transmission of the Knowledge of Christ.

"THOSE THINGS, WHICH YE HAVE BOTH LEARNED, AND RECEIVED, AND HEARD, AND SEEN IN ME, DO : AND THE GOD OF PEACE SHALL BE WITH YOU."—*Phil.* iv. 9.

THIS verse is supposed by some to close the letter. The remaining verses are considered to be the postscript in which the apostle gracefully acknowledges the generous contributions he had received from them through the hands of Epaphroditus. The text directs attention to the trans-

mission of the knowledge of Christ. Observe—

I.—This knowledge of Christ is to be transmitted FROM MAN TO MAN. "Those things which ye have both learned and received," &c. It is suggested that the transmission of this knowledge includes

two things. First: *Teaching on the part of the minister.* Paul had received the Gospel (1 Cor. xv. 3; Gal. i. 12.), and received it as a message, received it to communicate. This he did, did to the Philip-pians as well as to others. He did it in two ways (1) By *words.* "And heard." After his commission Paul used all his oratoric force for this purpose. He spoke to men rationally, devoutly, intelligently, earnestly, and with invincible persistence. The story of Christ is to be handed down from man to man by human lips. The pen can no more do the work of the tongue in this respect, than the moon can do the work of the sun. Under the influence of the former the landscape will wither and the rivers will freeze. He did this (2) By *example.* "And seen in me." Paul embodied the Gospel. His life confirmed the doctrine that his lips declared. In him, as in his Master, the "word became flesh." Here then is the Divine way of transmitting from generation to generation the story of Christ. Men have tried other ways and have signally failed,

hence the wretched moral condition of the world to-day. This way is, to a great extent, practically ignored. The transmission includes, Secondly: *Learning on the part of the hearer.* "Ye have both learned, and received, and heard." A man may tell the story of Christ with the utmost accuracy and fullness. The spirit of the story he may breathe in his life and embody in his conduct, but it is only vitally transmitted so far as it is learnt by the auditors. We live in an age when people through a vitiated moral taste, theological prejudices, and sectarian proclivities turn away their ear from the true teachers of their time. They resort to places where they can be tickled, not taught, flattered, not corrected.

II.—This knowledge of Christ is to be transmitted IN ORDER TO BE PRACTISED. "Those things which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do." A Gospel sermon should never be regarded as a lecture on philosophy, literature, or art, a mere subject for specu-

lative thought, or a subject of discussion. The Gospel is a *law*, it comes from the highest authority, and with a binding force. What is said is to be *done*, not merely approved, criticised, thought on, or sighed about, but done. The ideas communicated are to be translated into actions, and such actions will ever be Christly in spirit and tendency. But into what actions are the conventional sermons of England translated? Turn to the columns of our daily journals and read of the mercantile swindlings, the courtly depravities, idlenesses, and sports, the political intrigues, senatorial slanderings and quarrellings, the barbaric executions, the bloody wars, and other nameless iniquities sanctioned and enacted by the hearers of what are called Gospel sermons. Ah me! What boots preaching?

III.—The practice of this knowledge of Christ ENSURES THE SUBLIMEST GOOD. “The God of peace shall be with you.” In verse seven we read of having the “peace of God,” here of having the “God of peace.” To have His peace is something glorious; but to

have *Himself* is something transcendently greater. “The God of peace.” Elsewhere He is called the “God of Salvation,” the “God of consolation,” the “God of hope,” &c.; but this title seems to transcend all others. First: He is at peace with *Himself*. A moral intelligence to possess peace must be absolutely free from the following things,—*malice, remorse, forebodings*. The mightiest revolutions through all the millenniums and the hostilities of all the hells of the universe awake no ripple upon the boundless sea of His ever-flowing love. Secondly: He is at peace with the *universe*. He has no unkind feeling to any sentient being; He contends with no one; He is at peace with all. He contend, forsooth!—Does the immovable rock contend with the waves that break at its feet? Does the sun contend with the fleeting clouds?

Now they who translate the Gospel into their life shall have the “God of peace” ever with them,—with them as the sunny heavens are with the earth.

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Seedlings.

Days of the Christian Year.

Matthew v. 20.

(The Sixth Sunday after Trinity.)

“FOR I SAY UNTO YOU, THAT EXCEPT YOUR RIGHTEOUSNESS SHALL EXCEED THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF THE SCRIBES AND PHARISEES, YE SHALL IN NO CASE ENTER INTO THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.”

BEFORE gathering the primary and principal lessons of this word of the Lord Jesus, we may pluck a truth which is quite incidental, but of which we are fairly reminded; viz.—

I.—THE STARTLING ELEMENT IN CHRIST'S TEACHING. Surely the Great Teacher could hardly have uttered anything more surprising than this: *exceed* the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees in order even to *enter into* His kingdom! Be better than the best, holier than the holiest men, in order to take rank among the humblest citizens of the kingdom of God! This was more startling, if possible, than the word spoken to Nicodemus, (John iii.), than that uttered after the miracle on the other side the Lake of Galilee (John vi. 35, 51, 53). Jesus made frequent use of paradoxical and perplexing sayings.

The generation He addressed needed to be startled out of a deathful torpor, or out of a fatal spiritual pride, and He spoke words which astonished the people, which arrested their thought and aroused their consciences. The minister of Christ often finds it to be his bounden duty to act as his Master did on these occasions; he is not merely to be forgiven, he is to be commended for saying things which startle and astonish, which *seem* to be false but, on investigation, are found to be true.

II.—THE WORTHLESSNESS OF THE PIETY HE CONDEMNED. The righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees was not that of Moses, of David, of Isaiah; it was the righteousness of observance and propriety, of ordinance and abstinence. Their supreme anxiety was to render every smallest detail of devotion which the law prescribed, and leave undone every single act which was legally disallowed. Their piety spent itself in mere correctnesses and proprieties; it was lost in regularities of behaviour and niceties of speech. But although there might be a great quantity of infinitesimal

goodness in this, there was nothing in them satisfying to God or elevating to the human heart. All this formal, mechanical righteousness was worthless, inasmuch as it might exist (1) Without any love to God in the heart: it might be nothing more than habit contracted from childhood, or conformity to custom for the sake of man's approval, or unwilling and even laboured obedience with a view to future recompense. A man might be a perfect Pharisee without any touch or trace of pure affection for the Father of his spirit. (2) Without any love for man: ceremonial assiduity and proprieties of behaviour may co-exist with positive malignity and even murderousness of spirit, as they did in the lives and hearts of these sanctimonious and unscrupulous scribes. (3) Without any nobility of spirit and, therefore, without any excellency of life: men may multiply prayers and may cut off all excesses and irregularities, and yet they may be mean, selfish, ignoble, in the very last degree ungodly and unchristian. If a man have nothing more to show to God than attention to Christian ordinances and conformity to external Christian morals, he is a Pharisee *in heart*, his righteousness is fatally defective, he is not within the kingdom of Christ.

III.—THE NATURE OF THE PIETY HE HAD IN HIS MIND.

(1) It is rooted in real *repentance*.
 (2) Its stem is in a living *faith*.
 (3) Its flower and fruit are sacred *joy* and holy *love*. In other words, it is not a fair exterior from which all life has departed, but a living principle which manifests itself in varied forms, acceptable to God, approved of man, cleansing the heart, and clothing the life with usefulness and loveliness.

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 BRISTOL.

Mark viii. 1.

(*The Seventh Sunday after Trinity.*)

“THE MULTITUDE BEING VERY GREAT AND HAVING NOTHING TO EAT.”

THESE words express or suggest,—

I.—THE THREEFOLD DESTITUTION WHICH PREVAILS SO PITIFULLY. (1) *Physical*: this is in large measure and in various degrees; occasionally reaching actual starvation, the depopulating famine; often the presence of hunger, positive suffering from craving for food; very frequently an imperfect supply of nourishment, resulting in weakness or disease; quite commonly a fierce struggle for the necessities or comforts of life, ending in nervous disorder and death before the time.

(2) *Mental* : what millions of the children of men are living whose mental capacities have been neglected, and who are destitute, when they might have been enriched! Had their intellectual powers received the culture of which they were capable, what knowledge would they now possess of God's fair and wonderful world, what acquaintance with human nature and with human history, what attainments in art, &c. ! In view of what mankind might have been intellectually, we may well regard it as a multitude that has had nothing to eat, that has been starved. (3) *Spiritual* : this is only too painfully apparent in the superstitions, in the gross misapprehensions or utter ignorance of Christian truth, in which millions of mankind are living and dying.

II.—ITS NEEDLESSNESS. (1) There is no occasion for famine or poverty in the world. God has placed upon it and within it ample resources for the needs of twice the existing population. If instead of the wastefulness, idleness, and congestion, now obtaining, there were thrift, industry, and that diffusion of the population which would result in the cultivation of the vast fields now neglected, we should have enough to fill every human

home with comfort ; and (2) If all who could teach, and who have at their command time which they could well spare from other things, would spend their strength in enlightening the ignorant, would engage in the high and honourable work of mental culture, there would be comparatively little famine in this region. (3) Spiritual destitution is a needless calamity. If the teachers of the Christian faith who are busily occupying the same ground were only fairly distributed according to the wants of men ; and if those who spend all their time in luxurious, religious enjoyment would spend but half of it in serviceable ministry, there would be many "multitudes that now have nothing to eat" which would be rejoicing in the Father's house, where there is bread enough and to spare.

III.—OUR OBLIGATION IN THE MATTER. This is (1) to have a genuine Christian sympathy with all the children of want, of whatever kind their necessity may be, —physical, mental, or spiritual ; and (2) to take our part, both separately and in conjunction with others, in providing the food which sustains a healthy and happy life.

WILLIAM CLARKSON, B.A.

BRISTOL.

Matthew vii. 21.

(*The Eighth Sunday after Trinity.*)

"NOT EVERY ONE THAT SAITH UNTO ME, LORD, LORD, SHALL ENTER INTO THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN; BUT HE THAT DOETH THE WILL OF MY FATHER WHICH IS IN HEAVEN."

THESE solemn words lead us at once to notice a great truth, a great error, and a great duty.

I.—HERE IS A GREAT TRUTH PROCLAIMED. The truth is this, that Christ's sayings are to be put into practice by His disciples. Dean Mansel showed very unanswerably that Christianity is a regulative, not a speculative system. The wonder, in view of these words of our text, is that such an argument as the Dean's should ever have been needful. Yet it is still needful to protest that Christianity is not to be relegated to a place among Philosophies. Indeed it is rather an Art than a Science; "the Art of Holy Living," as Dean Goulburn well styles it. Christ's sayings are (1) only *understood* when they are put into practice; (2) only *honoured* when they are put into practice.

II.—HERE IS A GREAT ERROR PERPETRATED. Men professing interest in our Lord, avowing allegiance to Him, but not obeying Him. "Hearers but not doers,"

such are practical heretics of the worst class. Such an error is (1) *Common*. Avowed unbelief and stark infidelity are rare. But practical unbelief is so general that multitudes of voices are asking with dismay, "Is Christianity practicable?" just because the Sermon on the Mount seems as a dead letter in Christendom itself. Such an error as profession without practice is (2) *Abhorrent to Jesus*. Why? (a) Because of the injury to the individual so professing. (b) Because of the caricature of Christianity such profession is to onlookers. (c) Because of the mockery and treason of such conduct towards Christ. It calls Him Teacher, but will not learn His lessons of holy living; it calls Him King, but breaks His laws; it calls Him Saviour, but distrusts His grace.

III.—HERE IS A GREAT DUTY IMPLIED. The duty is that of consistent profession. For (1) The duty of *profession* is implied. It is right to own allegiance to our Lord; it is right to confess trust in our Saviour. The acknowledgment of the lip was never rejected by Christ if it was sincere. Many—though "not every one" calling Him Lord, Lord,—shall enter into the kingdom of heaven. But (2) The duty of *practice* is insisted upon. God has a will; it is a Father's will; and the great aim

of Jesus Christ was to make the utterance of men's lives as well as of their lips, "Father, Thy will be done"; not Thy will be theorised about, and dreamed about, but "*done*."

EDITOR.

1 Corinthians x. 4.

(*The Ninth Sunday after Trinity.*)

"THAT ROCK WAS CHRIST."

THE course of the apostle's argument here tends to suggest the resemblances between the rock in Horeb, whence water flowed for Israel, and the Lord Jesus Christ, from whom blessings, similar to but transcending water, flow to the whole human race. There is resemblance—

I.—IN THE APPARENT UNLIKELIHOOD OF THE SOURCE. The very name of the mountain was "hill of dried up ground." No wonder there was the incredulous cry, "must we fetch water out of the rock?" Yet from it issued rich and perpetual and beneficent streams. To the untaught eye it is thus with regard to Christ as the great source of "the water of life." A babe in a manger cradle; a carpenter's son; a wearied traveller; a broken-hearted sufferer; a dying malefactor. Truly He may be called "a root out of a dry ground." There is resemblance—

II.—IN THE MEANS BY WHICH BLESSINGS WERE PROCURED. The rock was smitten. The spring was a wound inflicted by the rod of Moses. It is in the working of the same law by which the bark must be bruised if you would have the healing balsam, the grape must be pressed if you would have the invigorating wine. Thus is it with the Christ Himself. "He was bruised." His body was "broken" as but a hint of an infinitely deeper and completer brokenness He endured for us men and our salvation. Christ tried, Christ tempted, Christ weeping, Christ dying—in a word Christ smitten—is the rock whence flowed of old, and flows to-day, all that consoles, inspires, reconciles, saves human life. As Leader, Model, Teacher, Friend, Saviour, our Lord was "made perfect through suffering." There is resemblance—

III.—IN THE VALUE OF THE BLESSINGS CONFERRED. It is not difficult to realise what was the want of the pilgrim nation at this time, nor is it difficult if we give ourselves to pitiful observation of others, and thorough introspection of ourselves, to realise what is the great want of humanity. In the river that broke forth from Horeb for the Jews, and in the influences that proceed from Christ for humanity, there is alike (1) *Exact*

adaptation to conscious need. Thirst cried for water, sin cries for Christ. Nothing but water would cool the parched lip, refresh the weary frame, renew the ebbing life. And nothing but "the truth as it is in Jesus" can meet the enquiries, the heart-ache, the despair of men. There is in the provisions of Horeb, and in those of Christ alike (2) *An all sufficient supply.* The water that flowed from the rock was sufficient and continual. It followed the pilgrims in their long wanderings, and was abundant even though a nation was on the march. Thus in Jesus Christ men have delighted to confess that for forgiveness, for sympathy, for teaching, for example, for help they have found—

"Enough for all, enough for each,
Enough for evermore."

The Rock that follows us is Christ. In Him is treasured an exhaustless fulness of the True, the Beautiful, the Good. His declaration, like the voice of many waters, is—"I am come that ye might have life, and that ye might have it more abundantly."

EDITOR.

Luke xix. 42.

(*The Tenth Sunday after Trinity.*)

"THIS THY DAY."

ALL the words of Jesus are of momentous worth. But His words, spoken with weeping, have an emphasis most tender and terrible of all. These words He spoke weeping. They bear in upon our inmost mind and heart such convictions as the following:

I.—THERE ARE SPECIAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACCOMPLISHING SPECIAL PURPOSES. Our great English Seer's words have become a proverb,—“There is a tide in the affairs of men:” thus the experience of the race through centuries has endorsed the declaration of the Royal Sage of Israel,—“there is a time for everything.” The mariner is not more observant of the tide than is every wise worker of the opportunity for his work. We might illustrate this by *The Scholar, The Merchant, The Traveller, The Statesman, The Teacher.* It is thus with regard to the great life-work of every man, *the salvation of his own soul, and of the soul of his fellows.* There is a “day of grace” with all the varying advantages of twilight, high noon, and sunseting. “Now is the accepted time; to-day is the day of salvation.”

II.—WHEN THESE OPPORTUNITIES HAVE PASSED THESE

PURPOSES MUST REMAIN UNFULFILLED. This is true of all the opportunities of which we have spoken. *Of Education*; often one hears it is too late to learn that language, or art, or science now. Time was when I could, but advantages, time, teachers, and, alas! capacities, do not continue with us. So of *Business*; that opening was neglected, and never came again. Is it not thus with *Cities and Nations*? Rome and Athens, like Jerusalem, had each its "day;" England now has its "day." Is it not thus with

the *individual soul*? "The harvest is passed, the summer is ended, and we are not saved!"

Conclusion. First: *Thank God for full opportunities for salvation.* "Thy day;" not an "hour" only as for the workers of evil to whom Christ said, "Now is your hour and the power of darkness." No; but a long, complete "day," and a day that brings "peace" to those who will accept it. Second: *Dread the possibility of letting such opportunity pass unemployed.* Such a calamity made Jesus weep.

EDITOR.

Homiletic Glances at Psalm cxix.

A Rapid Glance at Psalm cxix.

Two great facts stand out as the most prominent objects on the vast horizon of this grand psalm.

I.—That God's moral revelation should be the supreme STUDY of man. God has made many revelations of Himself, revelations to the senses, to the understandings, but this psalm and the Bible is a revelation to the *conscience* to man, as a moral being. First: *This revelation is unfolded to man in various phases.* What various terms in this psalm are employed to

represent it, "law," "commandments," "testimonies," "statutes," &c., &c. In all there is but one thing, *His Will* concerning man. Secondly: *This revelation meets man in every possible condition of life.* It meets him in youth, in age, prosperity and adversity, in sorrow and in joy. It is an all-penetrating, all-encompassing power. "Thy commandment is exceeding broad." Now this moral revelation should be the supreme study of man. All other studies should be subordinate. Notice—

II.—That God's moral revelation

should be the supreme RULE of man. Theologians have striven to reduce this grand code into speculative creeds and silly ceremonies. This has been an enormous crime and a huge evil. It has made the revelation of "none effect." Through the whole of this psalm, no more than in our Saviour's Sermon on the Mount, will you find anything about predestinations, justifications, atonements, ecclesiastical politics and ritualities. All refers to *human conduct*. This moral revelation is the supreme law. All human laws that do not agree with it should be opposed. All human laws to be wholesome and lasting should be based on it. What does God require of us?—"To do justice, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with our God."

Well Doing.

"BLESSED ARE THE UNDEFILED IN THE WAY, WHO WALK IN THE LAW OF THE LORD. BLESSED ARE THEY THAT KEEP HIS TESTIMONIES, AND THAT SEEK HIM WITH THE WHOLE HEART."—*Psalm cxix. 1, 2.*

OBSERVE—

I.—HUMAN HAPPINESS CONSISTS IN WELL DOING. "*Blessed are the undefiled in the way.*" It is not in theories, professions, cere-

monies, but in right doing. There is true blessedness for man *only in his deed*, not in his mere thoughts or emotions, but in his actions. Inaction is torpor, wrong action is misery, right action is bliss.

II.—WELL DOING HAS RESPECT TO THE DIVINE. "*Who walk in the law of the Lord.*" If there really be an atheistic world, that world knows nothing of well doing. Well doing can only grow out of a practical regard for the Supreme Existence.

III.—THE RESPECT FOR THE DIVINE MUST BE THOROUGH. "*With the whole heart.*" God must become the Moral Monarch of the soul, inspiring and controlling the whole.

Sin.

"WHEREWITHAL SHALL A YOUNG MAN CLEANSE HIS WAY? BY TAKING HEED THERETO ACCORDING TO THY WORD."—*Ps. cxix. 9.*

SIN is a small word but a tremendous thing. It implies (1) The existence of moral law, (2) The means of knowing moral law, (3) The capability of obeying moral law, and (4) A positive transgression of moral law. Two remarks here suggested concerning it—

I.—It is NOT A CONSTITUENT ELEMENT OF HUMAN NATURE. "*Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way?*" It is a pollution that can be cleansed from human nature. It is not an ingrained substance. Nay, it is something foreign to human nature, something as foreign as the stain is to the linen. Human nature was made without it, is injured by it, and can only become perfect without it. The mission of the Gospel is to wash it out.

II.—It GETS ATTACHED TO HUMAN NATURE IN ITS FIRST PERIODS. "*A young man cleanse his way.*" Men are born into a morally filthy atmosphere, and are cradled amidst soul-polluting elements, so that the soul gets stained at the outset of its career. Hence the young man needs cleansing from the wrong impressions he has received, the wrong thoughts that have been generated, the wrong inclinations that have been excited. Alas, some young men soon become loathsomely foul, *lepers* in society.

III.—It MIGHT BE REMOVED FROM HUMAN NATURE BY PROPER CONDUCT. "*By taking heed thereto according to Thy word.*" God's Word is the morally cleansing fountain, and in that fountain if he is to be cleansed, the young man must wash himself. No one

can do it for him. Heaven has prepared the cleansing font, but he must perform the cleansing deed.

Man's Distinguishing Capacity and Fearful Liability.

"OH LET ME NOT WANDER FROM THY COMMANDMENTS."—*Psalm cxix. 10.*

NOTICE I.—MAN'S DISTINGUISHING CAPACITY. What is that? Power to wander from Divine law. "*Oh let me not wander from Thy commandments.*" This is what the greatest objects in nature cannot do, neither sun, moon or stars can "*Wander from Thy commandments.*" Nor can the mighty oceans that sport with the fleets of nations "*wander*" from the Divine commandments. Nor can the giant mammoths of the animal creation "*wander*" from the Divine commandments. They are bound by their instinct, as by chains of adamant. But man has this power. He can bound from his orbit, he has done so, is doing so. Sublimely awful power this, the power that makes us men and links us to moral government. Notice—

II.—MAN'S FEARFUL LIABILITY. "*Oh let me not wander from Thy commandments.*" The possession of this power is a dignity of our

natures, the wrong use of this power is our crime and our ruin, and to the wrong use, alas, we are all fearfully liable. "*Oh let me not wander.*" If I wander from this commandment I wander from the right into the wrong, from light into darkness, from liberty to thralldom, from happiness to misery.

Moral Blindness.

"OPEN THOU MINE EYES."—
Psalm cxix. 18.

MORAL blindness is the *worst* kind of blindness, it is far worse than physical.

I.—Physical blindness has its COMPENSATIONS. Other faculties and organs generally become so keen and active as to make up for the loss of the eye. The imagination also, as in the case of Milton, Homer, &c., get power to create sunny worlds.

LONDON.

II.—Physical blindness is not CRIMINAL. It is a calamity. All blindness arises from one of three causes, the want of the visual faculty, the want of light, or the non-employment of the visual faculty. Man is morally blind not from the first cause, for he has *conscience*, that is, the eye of the soul; not from the second, for he has a *moral revelation* outside and inside of him. It is the last; he closes his eyes. A man who shuts his eyes is as truly blind for the time as he who has neither eyes nor light.

III.—Physical blindness CONCEALS THE HIDEOUS. To look upon the hideous is painful. Nature has hideous objects, monstrosities, human outrages, human agonies, &c. The blind man sees them not. But the man who is *morally* blind has often terrible visions of the most horrible things, his conscience scares and scathes him.

DAVID THOMAS, D.D.

The man in conscious virtue bold,
Who dares his secret purpose hold,
Unshaken hears the crowd's tumultuous cries,
And the impetuous tyrant's angry brow defies.

. HORACE.

Breviaries.

The First Miracle.

"THE THIRD DAY THERE WAS A MARRIAGE," &c. . . THIS BEGINNING OF MIRACLES DID JESUS."—*John ii. 1-11.*

THIS first Miracle suggests *four* lines of thought touching Christ's religion—
 I.—It is SOCIAL IN ITS GENIUS. All the *pre-Christian* religions, including the Jewish, were more or less ascetic. Most of the corrupt Christian religions also are. Christ, to show that His was sublimely social, *began* His miracles at the "marriage feast." Christianity is anti-ascetic. It is thoroughly human in its sympathies. II.—It is ORDERLY IN ITS PROGRESS. "Mine hour is not yet come." Christ does not move *arbitrarily* nor *capriciously*. He has a "time for everything," a plan of sequence. Why dost Thou not fulfil Thy prophecies? "Mine hour is not yet come." Why dost Thou not put all enemies under Thy feet? "Mine hour has not yet come," &c. III.—It is HUMAN IN ITS INSTRUMENTALITY. "Jesus saith unto them, Fill the water-pots with water," &c. Christ does His work *for man by man*. "We have the treasure in earthen vessels," &c. IV.—It is IMPROVING IN ITS ENJOYMENTS. "Thou hast kept the good wine until now." The pleasures of the *world* decrease in their enjoyment as one passes on through years; but those of *personal Christliness* increase. It is from better to better. "The end is better than the beginning."

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DAVID THOMAS, D.D.

Service a Song.

"IN THE MIDST OF THE CHURCH WILL I SING PRAISE UNTO THEE."—*Heb. ii. 12.*

THESE words are quoted from Psalm xxii. The Saviour employed one sentence of that Psalm to utter the deep emotions of Calvary. The author of this Epistle affirms that these words also were used by the Saviour Christ sang. This seems *literally* true. That our Saviour and His disciples, on the night in which He was betrayed, sang a hymn, for ever consecrates song, and crowns the true singer. But these words are *figurative*. They illustrate: I.—CHRIST'S ENGAGEMENT IN GOD'S SERVICE. Song is the symbol of worship. Singing praise is the highest act of worship. In all ages, as well as during the thirty-three years of His life on earth, Christ is engaged in God's service. When here as the

Incarnate Lord, by His precept, example, sufferings. So since ; for not only the Acts of the Apostles, but all true work is the Life of the Risen Lord. II.—CHRIST'S VOLUNTARY ENGAGEMENT IN GOD'S SERVICE. Singing is no slavish act : real singing is not ever perfunctory, but the ideal of spontaneousness. Such is Christ's service ; its voluntariness is the merit of His sacrifice, the glory of His service. III.—CHRIST'S JOYOUS ENGAGEMENT IN GOD'S SERVICE. Song utters joy—"Is any among you merry, let him sing." Christ's service was ever joyful—"I delight to do Thy will." IV.—CHRIST'S SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT IN GOD'S SERVICE. "In the midst of the Church ;" in fellowship with the whole assembly of the brethren. Christ's farewell promise—"I am with you always." We may learn, First : *The highest engagement of our life is serving God.* Second : *The true way of serving God is willingly, joyfully, socially.*

EDITOR.

Present Duty and Usefulness of Good Men.

"LET YOUR LIGHT SO SHINE BEFORE MEN, THAT THEY MAY SEE YOUR GOOD WORKS, AND GLORIFY YOUR FATHER WHICH IS IN HEAVEN."—*Matt. v. 16.*

THERE appear to be two principal modes employed by God to effect the conversion of men, viz.:—the preaching of the Gospel, and the lives of pious men. Light is not more suitable to the eye, music to the ear, than the Gospel is to the condition of man. "It is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." The other mode which God signally owns in the conversion of sinners, is the "Good Works" of pious men. I.—THE PRESENT DUTY OF GOOD MEN IN RELATION TO THEIR CONDUCT BEFORE MEN. There is a Divine command urging it. First : *Let your light shine by cultivating an uncompromising separation from the wickedness of the world.* Let the following exhortation be studied and obeyed.—"Be not conformed," &c. (Rom. xii. 2.) "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works," &c. (Ephes. v. 11.) "Be ye not unequally yoked." (2 Cor. vi. 14-17.) We are to try to confront every crime, and every vice, and every sin by a holy life. Moral evil must be overcome by moral goodness. Secondly : *By manifesting a loyal and growing attachment to the doctrines of the Bible.* We are not alarmed at the enemies of the Bible doing all they can to overturn the truths which have been the consolation of the Christian in adversity, in prosperity ; in life, and in death ; but we deem it highly important to remind those who are the friends of Christ and jealous for His honour that they should "contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints." Hence the apostle

says,—“Stand fast,” &c. (Phil. 1-27.) Thirdly : *By cultivating a spirit of brotherly love towards each other.* Christians are called upon to love each other, and thus to try to establish Christian union throughout the land. “Beloved, let us love one another ; for love is of God.” (1 John iv. 7.) Fourthly : *By zealously trying to promote the Redeemer’s Kingdom throughout the land.* There are those who think that they should be religious, but that they are not called upon to exhibit their religion to others. They cannot do this. “A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid.” They ought not to do this if they could. “Arise, shine, for thy light is come ; and the glory of God is risen upon thee.” (Isa. lx. 1.) II.—THAT THE FAITHFUL DISCHARGE OF THIS DUTY RENDERS GOOD MEN USEFUL. We are not to discharge this obligation from ostentation nor vain glory, or to gain the applause of men ; on the contrary, we should “let our light shine before men,” so as to compel them to glorify God. The usefulness of good men is seen in many ways,—First : *Their goodness often prevents spiritual corruption.* As salt preserves meat from putrefaction, even so the righteous preserves the bad from destruction. Secondly : *The salvation of many will be secured by it.* “Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth and one convert him,” &c. (James v. 19, 20.) “Brethren, if a man be overtaken,” &c. (Gal. vi. 1.) Conclusion. How great is the encouragement for all who are saved to labour for the salvation of others ! All cannot be great, but all can be good.

ST. ANTHONY.

JOHN WILEMAN.

The Epistle of Paul to Philemon.

PHILEMON lived at, and was, probably, a native of Colosse, a very old city near Laodicea, in the valley of the Meander. He was a rich man—owned a slave ; had been converted through Paul (v. 19), and was respected by the Christians (verses 23, 24). Tradition says he became Bishop of Colosse, and died a martyr under Nero. This letter contains : I.—PAUL’S PRAISE OF PHILEMON. Paul does not hesitate to praise Philemon for (1) *His co-operation in Christian work.* “Fellow labourer.” (2) *His relationship to the Saviour.* “Love and faith.” (3) *His relationship to his fellow Christians.* “Hearts of the saints refreshed.” (4) *His sensibility to appeals for kindness.* (v. 21). II.—PAUL’S REQUEST OF PHILEMON. Paul makes concerning Onesimus, a slave who had run away from and robbed his master, but having been converted by St. Paul was now a penitent, willing to return, (1) *A just request.* (2) *An earnest request.* (3) *A tenderly preferred request.* This epistle brings before us, First : TYPES OF THE EARLY CHRISTIAN CHARACTER. Second : AN EXPLANATION OF THE EARLY VICTORIES OF CHRISTIANITY.

EDITOR.

Pulpit Handmaids.

PITH OF GREAT SERMONS BY GREAT PREACHERS.

A Sermon by the late Rev. ARCHER BUTLER, M.A.

Analysis by Rev. T. BROUGHTON KNIGHT.

The Principles of the Final Judgment.

"AND THE KING SHALL ANSWER AND SAY UNTO THEM, VERILY I SAY UNTO YOU, INASMUCH AS YE HAVE DONE IT UNTO ONE OF THE LEAST OF THESE MY BRETHREN, YE HAVE DONE IT UNTO ME."—*Matt.* xxv. 40.

(a) A *solemn* statement made by Christ from the throne of the final judgment, to be listened to with awe; for every hour of our dream-like existence brings us nearer and nearer to the awful reality it discloses. (b) An *indisputable* statement, for whatever is uncertain or controvertible, it remains certain. In some respects it stands alone among the prophecies. Men may question as to the exact significance of other predictions but the judgment must be, and must be personal to every child of Adam. God has inwoven the future judgment into the being He has given us; He has so constructed our nature that our daily life is a prophecy of that day of reckoning. Of its circumstances and accessories, however, Revelation can alone tell; and in the text the Judge Himself undraws the curtain of eternity, showing His own everlasting throne—the procedures of His court—the test he will demand, and the verdict he will deliver. (c) A *strange*, and should be *startling*, statement. It is strange to read the story of our own hereafter, but stranger still to contemplate it without emotion, and whilst remembering its approach, never prepare for its coming. In the passage before us Jesus tells us how He will decide the question of man's eternal destination. The principles involved in the awful verdict of the text are two:—

I.—THAT CHRIST IS IDENTIFIED WITH HIS PEOPLE—MORE ESPECIALLY HIS POOR.

1. *In the identity of a common nature*; for this oneness there are, doubtless, abundant reasons *hidden* in the counsels of God, one, however, is clearly *revealed* in Scripture—the expiation of Christ which could only be fittingly made in the nature whose guilt was to be expiated. Hence Christ's nature with the world He redeemed is prominently and perpetually recorded in the statements of His sacrificial work. Mightier than man He became “the Son of Man,” and, as such, suffered for all, can sympathize with all, and will judge all.

2. *In the identity of a common spirit* He is like His sanctified people; for what Christ's nature has done for our justification His Spirit has done—is doing—for our progressive removal to His unclouded image. We have, as it were, given Him of our nature the *material* of our redemption; He has given us of His celestial nature the *properties* that are to qualify for the heaven He has won. By His ascension He has mysteriously entered (*a*) *Into our hearts*, and, abiding therein, becomes the perpetual source of the new nature; and (*b*) *Into the Church*, which is heaven upon earth.

3. *In the identity of a common condition of earthly life* He is also one with His disciples. He has left holiness in the world as His inward representative; He has left poverty as His outward portraiture. The reason assigned for this assumption of humanity is “*Perfected* through suffering.” “*Perfected*” as (*a*) A consummate *Leader* of salvation; (*b*) As a gracious *Sympathizer* that the full and flowing tide of brotherly affection might fill at once His own Divine heart and that of His afflicted people.

Such, then, is the threefold connexion of Christ with this world in nature, in grace, in affliction—a mysterious incorporation which is to be the very principle of His decisions as the tremendous Judge. He tells us “I am in the world wherever there is destitution,” and that, relieved by our benevolence, He is rejected by our avarice.

II.—THAT CHRISTIAN ATTACHMENT TO THE POOR, AS TO THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ABSENT, IS A SUPREME DUTY.

Consider 1. *The basis of this attachment* is love to God made manifest in Jesus. Everything will be seen by the light which Christ, as the blessed object of our affection, sheds, and will be endeared in proportion as it approaches Him, the centre and final standard of perfections. And here we have no bigoted exclusiveness, since it is in strict accordance with that great eternal rule of reason which bids us love men as men deserve our love. In every earthly attachment we are being trained in His school to love Him in His friends.

2. *The canon of this attachment.* Christian love does not supersede that of nature, but adds new and peculiar motives to the promptings of the natural affections. It is an affection (*a*) For all *living things*. The Christian may say, "I love everything that has life, because the Lord of glory gave that life." (*b*) For every *human being*, because the same Lord has adopted and redeemed our universal nature. (*c*) For every *regenerate man*, since Christ dwelleth in him, and is, therefore, to be loved with an affection yet more intense; and (*d*) For every *poor believer* who presents the Saviour to us not only in mystical communion but in outward form and lineaments. They are bequeathed to us as living and abiding memorials of His poverty for ever. There is a wild Italian legend which says the Lord is still a tenant of our earth, and, with His beloved disciple, annually arrives, an unknown wanderer, among the mendicants at the gates of Rome. It is among the poor we must seek these Divine features.

3. *The grandeur of this attachment.* Christ has made affliction Divine. It is for ever brightened, glorified, transfigured by Him who rejected every other state to wear it. We may well pray to be taught to understand and feel this mystery of woe, and thus love that which Christ has made His own, and to look with respect and awe upon that poverty which reminds us of His. For such poverty—that of Christ embodied in His people—I this day plead (preached for the relief of Irish Protestants). Consider—

III.—THAT OUR ATTACHMENT TO SUFFERING CHRISTIANS, ARISING FROM THEIR IDENTITY WITH CHRIST, SHOULD BE INFLUENTIAL. And here we must employ the language—

1. *Of reproof.* This Association, in order that it may relieve other suppliants, has itself to become a suppliant. What can account for this, or what can excuse it? The bonds that tie us to the poor are spun by Christ Himself. But we also use the language—

2. *Of protest* against two groundless assumptions (*a*) That *charity confined exclusively to believers is unworthy.* But all applications of benevolence must be exclusive, in some sense, to be available. The Gospel rule is simple. Love all; aid whom you can; but aid those most whom God has specially allocated to your bounty. It is argued (*b*) That *public legislation has now superseded* the necessity of private charity. But Christian consciences ought not to be satisfied to work in the harness of compulsory civil enactments—to commute with Christ, and refer Him for His high exclusive claims to the books of the parish officer. The Church's charity is God's own poor-law, with its spring deep in the regenerate human heart. "The love of Christ constraineth us." In closing we address to you words—

3. *Of incentive* to practical and generous sympathy with your necessitous brethren. There is (*a*) The *maintenance of the true faith* in the support of those whom the providence of Christ has scattered through the land to be His witnesses. "Converted" ourselves we should "strengthen the brethren," the weak, the persecuted "ready to die." And (*b*) *Self-discipline* is involved in this "fellowship of suffering." Were sorrow not in the world our indurated hearts could never be disciplined for the eternal charities of Heaven. Every sacrifice for our fellows fits our spirits to be eventually the loving tenants of a land of love. And (*c*) There are *the recognition and reward* of our merciful deeds in eternity. That recompense is promised by a Being more than mortal, and a mightier power than man's is pledged to remember in "that day" every labour of love. A voice is heard, soft as the breathings of infancy, yet awful too, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me."

T. BROUGHTON KNIGHT.

BRISTOL THEOLOGICAL INSTITUTE.

Suggestions for Science Parables.

All material Nature is but a parable of spiritual realities.

"Two worlds are our's, 'tis only sin
Forbids us to descry,
The mystic Earth and Heaven within,
Clear as the sea or sky."

CIRCULARITY.

"IN seeking for the sources of the Thames we are led from the springs of the earth to the rain of the heavens, and from this to the watery vapour which forms part of the atmosphere, and thence to the great caldron—the ocean—whence the heat of the sun distils that vapour. The great stream of fresh water which flows over Teddington Weir is fed, in large measure, by vapour which has been raised far away on the Atlantic. South and south-west winds sweeping across that ocean become highly charged with watery vapours; and these warm, moist winds, striking the Cotteswold Hills, deposit their freight of moisture in showers of rain, much of which reaches the Thames basin. This water is ultimately carried out to sea by the flow of the river, and mingles once more with its parent ocean, but only to be removed in due course by further evaporation. The waters of the earth thus move in a continued cycle, without beginning and without end. From rain to river, from river to sea, from sea to air, and back again from air to earth, such is the circuit in which every drop of water is compelled to circulate. The observer, who, looking down upon the Thames, watches the fresh water hurrying onwards to the sea, must remember that the sea is not its resting place, but that most of what he sees, perhaps all, will be distilled afresh, and return to the earth in showers, which may enter into the stream of Thames again, or swell the affluents of some river on the other side of the globe, or be secreted for untold ages in subterranean reservoirs. In the words of a wise man of old—
'All the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea is not full: unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again!'"

HUXLEY.

Selected Seedlings.—May Meetings, 1883.

(Continued from page 418, Vol. II.)

MOSES AND PAUL.—“*The only parallel to Paul was Moses; what the one did for the old law the other did for the new. Moses was a Hebrew by descent, but an Egyptian by Education. By nature he understood the one people, by culture the other. He was a mediator between Egypt and the Hebrews, just as Paul was a mediator between the Hebrews and the Greeks. Moses carried the vine out of Egypt and planted it in Palestine, and Paul brought the living vine out of Palestine and planted it throughout the world.*”—*Dr. Fairbairn.*

MINISTERIAL CULTURE.—“They must not be satisfied in the future merely with varied acquirements gained late in life. There must be the *cultivated powers*, disciplined and trained from a very early age. There will be wanted the powers of just and acute reasoning. There will be needed that which comes of real cultivation—the absence of exaggeration.”—*Archbishop Benson.*

REAL RELIGIOUS UNION.—“We are one, and getting to be more heartily and manifestly *one by the growth of life*, as you may have seen trees, held in unity, not by any external hoop of constraint, but by the intersection and intertwining of their mutually engrafted life.”—*Dr. Edmonds.*

WE PREACH NOT OURSELVES.—“It is possible for us who minister in holy things to preach from, ‘Behold the Man,’ so that *the man beheld is the man preaching*, and not the Man preached of. I have known it sometimes when it might be pure gold that was shown, but you could not tell, for it was covered with the poor tinsel that was tacked on it. The flower might be the Rose of Sharon, but you could not say, for it was painted; and that destroyed its beauty and fragrance to.”—*Dr. Chown.*

TEMPERANCE AND SPIRITUAL POWER.—“There were two reasons why all Christian men and women should unite with this movement. I believe that total abstinence *promotes* spiritual power, and I am quite sure that it *preserves* spiritual power. It is an act of self-control, an act in which the conscience predominates over the appetite, in which principle predominates over the appetite, in which principle predominates over passion, in which the higher nature of a man comes forward to rule the lower.”—*Rev. J. R. Wood.*

Correspondence Page.

[Enquiries or Answers will be inserted here concerning Books, or about Texts suitable for Special Occasions, or as to Sermons on given Verses or Topics. Brief letters on any matter that pertains to the work of the Gospel Preacher or Student will also be welcomed.]

ANSWERS.

DIVINE JUDGMENTS.

Do not the following extracts from Canon Kingsley's "Gospel of the Pentateuch" hint at an answer to C. R. T.'s question, in your last number, on "Divine Judgments?" He is speaking of the Plagues of Egypt, and says,—“Learned men have disputed how far these plagues were miracles. But whether they—whether the frogs, for instance—were not produced by natural causes, just as other frogs are, and the lice and the flies likewise, that I know not, neither need I know. If they were not, they were miraculous; and if they were, they were miraculous still. . . . As a wise man has said,—‘If you believe in any real God at all, you must believe that miracles can happen.’ He makes you and me, and millions of living things out of the dust of the ground continually by certain means, why can he not make lice, or anything else out of the dust of the ground without those means? We know that God has given all things a law which they cannot break. We know, too, that God will never break His own laws. But what are God's laws by which he makes things? We do not know. . . . You think it very wonderful that God should cause frogs to come upon the whole land of Egypt in one day; but that God should cause frogs to come up every spring, in the ditches, does not seem wonderful to you at all; it happens every year, therefore, forsooth, there is nothing wonderful in it! Ah, my dear friends, it is custom which blinds eyes to the wisdom of God, and the wonders of God, and the power of God, and the glory of God, and hinders us from believing the message with which He speaks to us from every sunbeam, and every shower, every blade of grass, and every standing pool. ‘Is anything too hard for the Lord?’”

LYNMOUTH:

E. T.

QUESTIONS.

Will your readers give a list of great books on the History of the Early Church.

STUDENS.

Reviews.

ECHOES FROM THE WELSH HILLS, or Reminiscences of the Preachers and People of Wales. By Rev. DAVID DAVIES, Weston-super-Mare; author of "The New Name, and other Sermons." London: Alexander and Shephard, Castle Street, Holborn.

For many reasons, and not the least of them, from our own descent from as true and good an old Pembrokeshire minister as any of the Welsh worthies this book describes, we have been anticipating Mr. Davies' work ever since its approaching publication was advertised. Our anticipations are more than realised, for the book is so bright, so sympathetic, so charged with life, that we were fascinated into reading it from beginning to end in one day. Mr. Davies' aim "has been to illustrate in a popular form the religious and social life of the Welsh people, their generous hospitality, ardent patriotism, as well as the quaint humour, the poetic fancy, and rich pathos of their religious teachers." Most admirably has he fulfilled his labour of love, alike in the seventeen chapters in which he pictures scenes, narrates events, or records conversations; and in the thirteen "Appendatory" chapters that comprise a valuable essay on the "Characteristics of Welsh Preaching," reprinted from *The Homilist* of twenty-one years ago, and a dozen specimens of Welsh Sermons. Greece is not more identified with sculpture, nor Rome with arms, than is Wales with preaching. Traditions of famous preachers and of memorable sermons gather round every hamlet of "wild Wales." Preachers have been the princes of the Principality. The following sentence from the chapter, called "A Ministerial Chat," in this book indicates the tone of thought about preachers. "Mr. Jones, of Llanllyfni, preached a very powerful sermon in that field twenty-five years ago on the text, 'The Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek,' and taking those words as prophetic of Christ, he said, 'The Lord of Heaven had only one Son and He anointed Him to be a preacher. Young men in the ministry think highly of your calling!' The effect was thrilling." The volume, however, is not devoted entirely to preachers and preaching. Perhaps many will find keen enjoyment, as we did, in the chapter on "Mary Jones and her Bible," which narrates the origin of the Bible Society. It is an exquisite tale worthily told. Nor must we forget to thank the author for the chapters on "Anniversary Services at Horeb," "John Vaughan and his Bible Class," and "the Association."

SHAKSPEARE'S HISTORICAL PLAYS, ROMAN AND ENGLISH, with Revised Text, Introduction and Notes, Glossarial, Critical, and Historical. By CHARLES WORDSWORTH, D.C.L. In Three Vols. Edinburgh: Blackwood and Sons.

The works of Shakspeare are generally regarded as the productions of a genius almost superhuman. His plays constitute the bible of the larger portion of Englishmen. Albeit they abound with imperfections in taste, sentiment, and art. Dr. Wordsworth, than whom a more competent man in every respect could not be found, has undertaken the task of purifying and correcting the productions of our matchless bard. His object has been, he says, "To endeavour in some measure to do for our immortal bard the special service which, were he living now, he might desire to do for himself. To relieve him from, at least, the more obvious imperfections which at once derogate from his supreme excellence and diminish the gratification to be derived from the perusal of his works, and so to obtain for him some portion of the justice of which from the circumstances which attended both their production and publication to the world, he has hitherto been deprived. And when it is remembered that no less than twenty out of the thirty-seven plays were not published in any known edition till seven years after the author's death, it will easily be understood in respect to these plays at least how much ground there must be to suspect the operation of other causes than those of the author's own mind or hand in the formation of the text as it now exists. The philologist, the grammarian, the lexicographer, the antiquarian, the deeper student of Shakspeare's mind and art will still seek and demand our poet's words in the entirety of the common text, but the ordinary reader, and especially the young student of either sex will not, I think, be sorry to receive an edition of all the more celebrated and important plays, if the editor's design is to be fully carried out, presented in such a form that they may read the volumes from beginning to end with unalloyed pleasure and unabated interest, or at least with no difficulties unexplained, no stumbling-block left to obstruct the path."

The author has devoted many years to the study of Shakspeare, and while his studies have been enlightened and severely critical, they have been judiciously appreciative and conscientious. His glossary and notes are of priceless worth. We have heard men say—blind admirers of the poet—Shakspeare cannot be improved, we want no expurgations or corrections, give the work to us as he produced it, with all its indelicacies, profanities, and grammatical blunders,—if you will. These wonderful men are ignorant of the fact that no Shakspeare's plays exist exactly as he produced them. His text in its original and genuine form exists not

and that no man would have been more ready to have accepted certain corrections in spirit, thought, and style, than the renowned author himself. Walter Savage Landor, no mean authority in literature, has written, "I am sometimes ready to shed tears at Shakspeare's degradation in comedy. I would almost have given the first joint of my forefinger rather than he should have written such trash as that in the 'Two Gentlemen of Verona.'" We consider that the Bishop of St. Andrew's, the author, has conferred a most priceless boon upon the reading public in these volumes.

ALDERSYDE: A BORDER STORY OF SEVENTY YEARS AGO. By ANNIE SWAN. Edinburgh: Oliphant, Anderson, and Ferrier.

This is a capital tale, written in a fine spirit, in good style, and with a noble purpose. Any girl who studied thoughtfully the character of "My Sister Janet" would inevitably be delivered from the common snare of dreaming of marriage as the main end of their young life.

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT. By Dr. BERNHARD WEISS. Translated by Rev. JAMES E. DUGIND. Volume II. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark.

This is the Second Volume of a Work which appeared many years ago, and the First Volume of which we have before noticed. Scarcely any change is made in the plan of the book, the numbers of all the chapters and plans remain the same. The First Volume consisted of three parts, the First referring to the teaching of Jesus according to the earliest tradition—the Second to the original—apostolic type of doctrine, previous to the time of Paul; and the Third to Paulinism. In this volume we have a continuation and completion of the Third Part; also the Fourth Part referring to the earlier apostolic doctrinal system in post Pauline period; in the Fifth Part treating of the Johnean theory. The whole work is, perhaps, the most comprehensive extant on the subject, and certainly in profundity of scholarship, vastness and variety of reading, keenness of insight, vigour and independence of research, has never been excelled. It is a work for Biblical students, and they of course must procure and investigate it. Though we are far enough from endorsing some of its sentiments and conclusions we feel it the duty of every man who would duly qualify himself for pulpit work to make himself acquainted with its contents.

THE LIFE OF CHRIST. By BERNHARD WEISS. Edinburgh : T. and T. Clark.

This volume, part of *Life of Christ*, is by the same Author, and proceeds from the same publishing house as the book just noticed. In his dedication the Author says to his dedicatee,—“You are assured that for more than twenty years I have occupied myself with the investigation of sources in the field of Gospel history, that I have not avoided the most laborious labour, as regards the details of the comparison of texts, and have tested in all directions the methods of criticism, which are often so intricate, until I forced my way to perfect clearness regarding the history and the character of our evangelical tradition. But the work of criticising the sources cannot be an end in itself, its object must be found in the historical construction of the life of Jesus ; and this, alone, can be the final test of the correctness of the results of criticism.” This volume is but the first instalment of a work which promises to be a contribution to Biblical Science of unprecedented worth. This volume consists of two books. Under the first heading we have twelve chapters the subjects of which are,—The Gospel of Christ and the Gospels—Discovery of the Old Source—Memoirs of Peter—Gospel of the Jewish Christians—The Gospel of the Gentile Christians—The Johannic Question—History of the Gospel of John—Eye Witness and Tradition—Legend and Myth—Fiction and Truth the Tendency—Truth—The Historical Representation of the Life of Jesus. Under the second heading we have twelve chapters, the subjects of which are : Home and Father’s House—Immaculate Conception—The Sign in the Hill Country of Judea—The Nativity in Bethlehem and Salutation in the Temple—Danger and Deliverance—In the Days of His Youth—The Messianic Calling—The Prophet at the Jordan—The Baptism of the Spirit—Temptation and Approbation—Formation of the Earliest Discipleships—At the Marriage in Cana. It will be seen that our author has taken possession of a wide and fruitful field—a field from which we shall have to pluck many weeds, and in which he will undoubtedly discover according to his plan, many priceless seeds of truth. We shall await with interest the advent of the second volume.

RECOLLECTIONS OF ARTHUR PENRHYN STANLEY. By GEORGE GRANVILLE BRADLEY, D.D. John Murray : Albermarle Street.

An extract from the introduction of these recollections of Dean Bradley will indicate the nature and character of this volume. “The following pages are the result of an attempt to comply with a request made on

behalf of the Philosophical Institution of Edinburgh. The Directors did me the honour of expressing a wish that I should open their Winter Session by delivering two lectures on my much-lamented friend and predecessor, the late Dean of Westminster. I could not refuse to avail myself of such an opportunity for placing on record my recollections of one to whose intimacy I had been admitted in early youth, and whose friendship I had been privileged to enjoy for more than forty years. I felt it, however, due alike to the memory of my friend and to the legitimate claims of those whom I was to address, to bring before them something more than mere personal reminiscences of one who had filled so large a space in the literary and theological history of the whole period during which I had known him, I thought it right, therefore, to prepare myself for the task by a careful re-perusal of his published works, especially of the numerous lectures, pamphlets, articles, essays, and occasional sermons, which, even more markedly than his longer and more elaborate writings, bear the true impress of his mind and character. Not a few of these, which had escaped my memory or notice, were placed at my disposal by various friends; and, in addition to all that I had preserved of my own correspondence, I was permitted to avail myself of letters and notes of personal recollections, entrusted to me by the kindness of some who had been bound to him by the closest ties of enduring friendship." These Recollections are of rare interest and worth. When we had the pleasure of dining with the late Dean, at the Deanery, in company with his illustrious and charming wife, we had a glimpse into his joyous nature, his fertile genius and thoroughly Catholic spirit. This book will be read with interest by thousands, to whom it will afford a similar glimpse that will re-inspire them with faith in the nobilities of our better humanity.

SCRIPTURE PAINTING BOOK, for Children, containing Twenty-Two Outline Pictures Illustrated of Bible History. By WILLIAM GUNSTON. London: W. Mack, 4, Paternoster Square.

Here is a capital thought, exquisitely embodied. The book consists of a score of pages of simple and interesting Bible narratives, and as many or more pages of well-drawn outline pictures for children to colour according to their own judgment and taste; and all this for a Shilling. We cannot conceive of anything more likely to wing the often heavy hours of a child's Sunday, or to brighten them with pleasanter memories.

THE ILLUSTRATED CHILDREN'S BIRTHDAY BOOK. Edited and in part
Written by F. E. WEATHERLY, with Illustrations by KATE
GREENAWAY, KATE CRAUFORD, ROBERT BARNES, MISS THOMAS, &c.
London : W. Mack, 4, Paternoster Square.

This is a very pretty adaptation of the now familiar "Birthday Book" to little children's eyes, ears, understandings, and hearts. The pictures are charming as the artists' reputations would lead us to expect ; and the verses are brimful now of the fun, now of the tender affections, now of the genuine religiousness that true children always love.

SCRAP PACKET for Children. London : W. Mack, 4, Paternoster Square.

Two hundred pictures of all sorts of scenes and events that would literally fill the hearts of little folks with childish rapture, as with thoughtful eyes and nimble scissors they enrich their Scrap-book with what is here so wisely selected and so liberally supplied. This Scrap Packet is destined to bring as much delight to thousands of children as ever the Royal Academy has to visitors in the London season.

A BOOK OF PRAISE FOR HOME AND SCHOOL. By S. D. MAJOR. The
Religious Book Society, 28, Paternoster Row, London.

Out of the 330 hymns that in this neatly got up little book are provided for twopence, there are of course many that are thoroughly adapted for their purpose. Not a few of them, rung out on the silvery chimes of children voices, have often borne in upon our weary moods the music of the heavenly evangel. But some others of them are, in our judgment, not only incongruous in the mouths of children, but unfit for any brave, honest, God-fearing lips. However, the whole collection is so large that such can be easily avoided.

SUNDAY SCHOOL REWARD TICKETS. Packet containing One Hundred and Ninety-two Scripture texts, printed in gold and colours. Price 6d. W. Mack, 4, Paternoster Square, London.

We need simply call attention to these well selected and elegantly printed tickets, as being the best we know, and indeed as being as good as we can desire for their purpose.



Leading Homily.

CHRIST ASCENDING : THE CHRISTIAN ASCENDING.

“AND HE LED THEM OUT AS FAR AS TO BETHANY, AND HE LIFTED UP HIS HAND, AND BLESSED THEM.”—*Luke* xxiv. 50.

THE ascension of Christ is a natural and consistent conclusion to His grand and supernatural life. He had passed through the gloomy regions of death, and conquered it. He was no longer subject to death. His bodily organisation was now purged from infirmity and all gross elements, and therefore could not be touched by death any more. He was no longer subject to ordinary material laws. He sometimes suddenly appeared among the disciples when all doors and windows were closed, and as suddenly and mysteriously disappeared. He said to Mary, when she wanted to embrace Him, “Touch Me not, for I am not yet ascended to My Father.” Paul, in his epistle to the Romans, declared that Christ, risen from the dead, should die no more, because death had no more dominion over Him; that His early life was a life in human weakness, and therefore subject to death: and that His resurrection-life was a life in Divine power. It was, therefore, natural to expect that He would pass away from His earthly existence to a higher life, not through death, but in a supernatural way. It was the last link in the great supernatural chain.

It was also natural to expect that He would in time ascend to His Father. It was merely returning home. Heaven was His real residence. There He had lived before His incarnation. He constantly spoke of having come from above and from His Father, and of His former glory with the Father. "He who was rich, for our sakes became poor." He emptied Himself of His glory, and became a servant. He also very often referred to His returning to heaven and to His Father. *Descending* and *ascending* were themes on which He delighted to dwell. He for a while assumed our defective human nature; He lived in it in pain, and sorrow, and weakness, and then returned to His essential Being—His perfect life which He had with the Father before the world was. When He descended to the earth He did not cease to be God; when He ascended to heaven He did not cease to be man. He is still identified with us in our joy, our pain, and our struggles. He is our High Priest, sensitive to every ripple on the great ocean of humanity.

I.—Notice the PLACE of His ascension. "And He led them out as far as to Bethany."

There must have been a reason for this. Bethany, as you know, was a small village on the eastern slopes of the Mount of Olives, about two miles from Jerusalem, surrounded with olives, pomegranates, almonds, oaks, and other trees. In the neighbourhood of this village, Luke tells us, this took place. There is, I think, *a significance in the place*. I can, however, only make a guess as to why He selected this place above all others. In the first place, it seems to me that very likely He had a natural desire to be exalted where He had suffered so much humiliation. Forty days before He had trodden the same path in great affliction. From the summit of Olivet He had prophesied the end of, and wept over, Jerusalem. It was in this village He lodged during the last week of His life. To the house of Martha and Mary He nightly came to be refreshed after the day's toil and anxiety. Here He often prayed in agony, and near here endured the sorrow of Gethsemane. But now all that gloom and depression and persecution had passed away, and His human nature longed to revisit the old spot in joy and triumph. Such a wish is very

human. There are some scenes, towns, and houses which have been made sacred to us by suffering, sickness, and Gethsemane struggles; and now that the suffering is gone and the cloud is vanished, we love to visit the old haunts, and show them our triumph, our joy, our exaltation. The mother frequently looks at the empty crib, and the widow at the vacant arm-chair; and not always through blinding tears of sorrow, but sometimes with a sweet, melancholy joy. Another reason for selecting Bethany has been suggested by one rich in his thoughts on the last scenes in our Lord's life, and that is, *that being deeply attached to places and friends, He could not depart without a farewell visit.* Bethany was the scene of many touching incidents in His life. It was here He raised Lazarus to life; here He feasted at the house of Simon the leper, and was anointed by Mary; and from this place He made His royal entry into Jerusalem. It is, therefore, no wonder that He chose this spot for His ascension and glorification. It was very kind of Him to think of His friends, Mary and Martha, in this hour of joy. He seemed to say to them, "You have seen Me often in humiliation, weakness, and sorrow. You have been burdened with the weight of My gloom, you have been sharers with Me in My agony and cross, you shall now see Me in My joy and radiant glory. Be of good cheer, I go to prepare a place for you." And no doubt He was attached to the place itself. There were some villages, mountains, valleys, and rivers of Palestine made very sacred to our Lord through holy associations. The Jordan, the Samaritan well, Nazareth, Bethlehem, Mount Olivet, Gethsemane, and, above all, Bethany. He seemed to say, as He travelled towards it with His disciples, "I want to have a look at it before I go, that I may take the scenery of it on My mind to heaven." All this is very human. We have a natural but strong desire to die among our dearest friends. Death is terrible and lonely enough under any circumstances, but death in a wilderness or among strangers is still worse. When we are seized with a sickness which is unto death we call for all our friends. Father, mother, sisters, and brothers must be there, that we may see their faces and hear their voices; all other voices will jar upon our spirit. Not only so, but we

have a strong desire to die at home. There are some places to which we are deeply attached. Some brooks sing sweeter songs to us than others. There are some hills, and fields, and woods that are eloquent with the thoughts of other days. There are some trees under whose shadows we have in former days sat, talking of highest themes or sweetest loves. There are some roads along which we have walked with bounding joy or heavy heart. There are some houses where our highest pleasures and deepest sorrows have been born—where we have formed the divinest ties, met our best friends, sung our noblest songs, offered our intensest prayers, and shed our truest tears. Our prayer is, “O God, let me die here—here under the brow of this hill, under the shadow of this old tree, by the side of this babbling brook, within the sacred walls of this ancient house. From this sacred spot let my spirit pass away to the home above. In this hallowed soil let my bones lie till the resurrection day.” And in our text we have not only the place from which He ascended but the place to which He ascended—Heaven. There are two or three heavens mentioned in the Scripture. There is the firmament called heaven. Moses speaks of the windows of heaven being opened at the deluge. Job speaks of the bottles of heaven. The stellar universe is called heaven. The stars are so many lamps leading up to the temple of God. But above all these there is another heaven—the place of God’s dwelling and glory. To this region Paul was caught up. There are many names for this heaven in the Bible—Paradise, Abraham’s bosom, New Jerusalem, being with Christ, My Father’s house, a building, a better country, an inheritance, a crown, Glory, Peace, and Rest. To this heaven of glory, rest, peace, and holiness, Christ ascended: and that is the heaven He opened for us. I do not wonder the disciples gazed on Him as He moved upwards, no doubt they longed to go with Him. There is a great contrast between that heaven and this earth. Here it is dark, there it is light; here we are strangers, there is our home; here there are conflicts, there are the palms of victory; here there is sorrow, there there is delight.

II.—The SPIRIT of His ascension. “*He lifted up His hands, and blessed them,*” &c.

This shows that He was earnest and reverent in His manner. I might compare the human body to a glass beehive. Such a hive is transparent, and we can see through it the working and movements of the bees. The human body is also transparent. Through its actions, moods, and attitudes we may learn the spirit of the mind. The wave of the hand, the glow of the cheek, the tone of the voice, the glance of the eye reveal to us what is in a man's soul. This was the case especially with Christ. He had a sensitive human frame which vibrated with all the emotions of His heart, and it is frequently said of Him that He beckoned with His hand, or lifted up His hands to heaven, or lifted up His eyes to heaven. His thoughts and emotions moved His whole nature; and now in His prayer to God He lifted up His hands, those hands bearing the scars, and radiant with Divine glory, towards the object of His worship. What a reverent attitude! Angels show the same reverence and awe in approaching God. With veiled faces they praise Him. The publican in the temple prayed with bowed head. If Christ and the angels draw near to God with such reverent forms, truly it becomes us to approach Him with deepest humility. Flippancy, boldness, impudence, boasting, are unbecoming in His presence. Humility, reverence, holy fear, awe, and love are the proper emotions with which to approach the King of kings and Lord of lords: and if we are reverent in spirit, that reverence will come out in the trembling tones of our voice, in the attitude of our hands, and the subdued upward gaze of our eyes. The next thing He did was to bless them. We read that Aaron, the high priest, lifted up his hands and blessed the people, and then the glory of God appeared. Jacob blessed his sons, and Moses the children of Israel. So Jesus now blessed the apostles. On another occasion we read that He breathed on them. It would be very interesting to know what were the words He used in pronouncing His benediction. It has been suggested that perhaps He used the old formula of the Psalmist—"The Lord bless thee and keep thee: the Lord make His face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: the Lord lift upon thee the light of His countenance, and give thee peace." Whatever were the words He used they must have

fallen from His lips with peculiar tenderness and grace. If you will allow such an expression, Christ seemed at home in blessing. He began His ministry with the beatitudes. Very rarely did He exercise severity or show even holy anger. It is true that He cursed the barren fig-tree, drove out the money-changers from the temple, smote the intruders in Gethsemane. But He rather used His power to bless, not to punish. He came into a world that had been cursed with sin. The world's heart was aching with sorrow. The world's limbs were diseased, men were stricken with blindness, and everywhere they were crying for a helper and healer. The curse of sin had wrought weakness, misery, ruin, destruction, death, in all hearts. Into this cursed world Christ came to heal the people's plagues, to lift the demon-power from off their bodies, to lead the captives from their dark dungeons. He stood among the sick and demon-vexed as a living fount of spiritual blessing. They touched Him and virtue flowed out of Him. O to be blessed by Jesus Christ! To be blessed by Him is to be made eternally happy, eternally rich, eternally strong. I would not despise the blessing, the goodwill and wish of a fellow-man. If the Pope of Rome wished to bless me I would thank him for it. There is something more than mere sentiment in the blessing of a loveable dear old Christian patriarch. I look upon it as one of my greatest privileges to listen to a venerable silver-haired saint, as he bends on me, saying, "God bless you, my dear young friend." Such a benediction from such lips is worth more than gold. But it is a higher privilege to be blessed by the King of kings. This blessing contains in it all good gifts. To receive His smile and benediction is to receive heaven into the heart, and to be crowned with the crown of life. But not only did Christ begin His ministry with blessing, He closed it with the same act, "while He blessed them He was parted from them." *It was His last act on earth.* He had often blessed the disciples during life, and that they might have a happy memory of Him He let the curtain fall while stretching out His hands to bless them. That was the last thing they saw Him do: it was a happy conclusion to His grand ministry. He had lived to bless; He died to bless; He went to

heaven scattering showers of blessing behind Him. I have before now seen a pious parent gathering his children around his dying bed to give them a parting kiss and blessing, and then passing away to the land of light. Such a scene reminds us of Him who, when He had showered benedictions on His friends, went to heaven to be enthroned and glorified.

Again, remember, His act of blessing was not cut short at parting. It was a continued act—"While He blessed them." He began to bless on earth; He is gone to heaven to continue in the same work; and He will not cease blessing until the last believer is in heaven; in Him all the families of the earth are to be *blessed*; He is ready and waiting to bless now. He goes up and down still among the sorrowful, the poor, the sinful. His hands are full of benedictions, and His heart is full of love; and wherever there are hearts to receive His blessings, there He will bestow them.

Again, He ascended in the spirit of love. There is a significance in the phrase—"He was parted from them, and carried up into heaven." There was no violence, but there was no voluntary movement on His part. He did not want to leave them. Having loved His own, He loved them to the end. His coronation was before Him, high honours awaited Him. Angels were ready to sing, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, that the King of glory may come in." Yet He lingered on the mount. What a different departure to that on the cross. "Into Thy hands I commit My spirit." He was impatient for His cross. He rushed towards the cross. He had a passion for death. He was not satisfied till He had felt his grip and conquered his sting. But for His throne He had no such passion. He did not leave until He was carried away.

III.—The PURPOSE of His ascension.

(a) He ascended to heaven to receive *His mediatorial power*, to deliver us from guilt and sin. Christ is from everlasting equal to the Father in power and majesty, but as the "Son of Man" He was endowed with power to put all His enemies under His feet. The Scriptures everywhere associate special power with the ascension. The Psalmist says:—"The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit Thou on My right hand until I make Thine enemies Thy

footstool." Paul to the Colossians says:—"Seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God." Sitting on the right hand of God means some great and peculiar power given to Him. In another place it is said that angels, principalities, and powers are made subject to Him, that He is exalted up on high, leading captivity captive, and receiving gifts for men. Again it is said, that "all power is given Him in heaven and earth." Christ sits on the right hand of God, clothed in a human form still; invested with real royalty, and wielding a real sceptre. The real man is there as well as the real God. We must not think that when He left this earth on the bosom of an airy cloud, He threw off His humanity as a garment. No! He has taken His manhood with Him to heaven. In His manhood and Godhead He stands to plead for us, and introduce us to His Father. His bosom still swells with the waves of human sorrow which flood human hearts the world all over.

(b) Christ ascended in order to give us power to ascend after Him. He had said—"These signs shall follow them that believe; in My name shall they cast out devils." "They shall take up serpents." This power His people received at His ascension. Again the Psalmist says—"He shall give His angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. Thou shalt go upon the lion and adder; the young lion and dragon shalt thou tread under thy feet." These are figurative expressions, and signify that Christians shall overcome sin and master the corruptions of their fallen nature. This is the power which Christ has purchased for them. If it be true that Christ ascended we shall also ascend, for everything in Him is repeated in us. He died, He arose, He ascended. We are dead with Him, we are risen with Him in heavenly affections, living a new life. We are also ascended together with Him. Paul says "that we sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." This life is but a brief passage from a state of imperfection to one of glorious perfection. Every man, more or less, has two dreams in his soul, the dream of a lost Paradise and of one to be regained. Men in every land have sighed after the lost bliss of a golden age. Even the little child has memories of a past heaven, and poets tell us that before we came here we all

lived in a land of light, and life, and bliss ; and therefore it is that little babes are so innocent, pure, and beautiful. They are still encircled with the glory of the other world from which they have come. Whether that is a truth or a poetic fancy, I do not know ; but of this I am sure, that man has still in his heart some echoes of the harmonies of the old Paradise which was lost through the fall. A tradition has passed down the ages that the world was once free from sin, darkness, and sorrow. Further still, man dreams of a future golden age—another land of life, and light, and joy. If he has thrust himself out of heaven, he desires to return, and hence was formed the ancient fable, that a certain Prometheus often ascended to heaven to steal fire from the gods. Heaven is our native homè. We are but strangers and pilgrims here, and hence our restlessness. This world is not in harmony with our condition. The world's voices only mock our troubled spirits. It has no sympathy with our grief and joy. Often the sky is blue and the sun bright when our soul is eclipsed. Often sorrows overwhelm us, and grief blinds us, and passions shake our whole soul, and then we cry out for our ascension. Often in these deep sorrows of life we catch a glimpse of another life—a sudden flash, a mystic hint, like the lightning that darts between the clouds ; and between the open cloud we look far into a depth of transcendent blue sky, and read the meaning of life. Just as all streams run into the ocean ; as all fire turns to the sun ; as the morning mist rises towards the clouds, every soul longs for immortality, asserts its claim for an ascended life, and soars towards heaven, its native land.

First: *Learn what is the meaning of our present life.* It is a time of probation and discipline. God gives us seventy years to grow in, and in this brief period we are to make preparations for more than 70,000 years. The best of us now are very unfinished ; but God is training us, and we must not be impatient if God's work seems slow. It took Him ages to build the mountains. It takes Him a thousand years to form a tree. Be patient, if it only takes Him seventy years to form a complete man. There are some birds who never fly above the trees or mountain-tops : they are lowland birds ; they are of the earth, earthy. The lark, on the

other hand, soars away to the blue depths of the upper heaven. With happy song she mounts up and up, till her shadow is lost in the blue ether, and her song dies away among the angels' notes, and the tip of her wing flaps against the gates of Paradise. There are some human beings whose native atmosphere is the earth—who never rise above the horizon of time. But there are other heaven-born souls, whose native air is heaven. Lark-like they rise from transitory things, and soar to heaven their home—they are always ascending. They oft exclaim, "O that I had the wings of a dove! for then I would fly away and be at rest." They are not happy till they fan with their spiritual wings the very gates of Paradise.

Second: *Learn the happy destiny of all who rise with Christ.* It is often a matter of wonder to us where the dead are gone. Those dear ones who walked and talked with us, where are they? The other day we heard their voices, saw their living forms, and felt their warm hand. Shall we again feel the touch of that vanished hand, and hear again the sound of that voice that is still? And if they are still living, where are they? Where? in heaven? These are questions we constantly ask. Christ has answered them by His resurrection and ascension. He had no doubt about the future life. He spoke of going to His Father after death. He also said that where He is we shall be also. Heaven, therefore, is where the Father and the Son dwell. Further, it is said that we shall be like Him in body and spirit. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is"—like Him who is perfect wisdom, perfect justice, perfect truth, perfect love; like Him the chiefest among ten thousand, and the altogether lovely. Amen.

SWANSEA.

D. BLOOMFIELD JAMES.

"The verdict given by pure equity enjoins a protest against every existing pretension to the individual possession of the soil; and dictates the assertion, that the right of mankind at large to the earth's surface is still valid; all deeds, customs, and laws, notwithstanding."—HERBERT SPENCER.

Homiletical Commentary.

HOMILETIC SKETCH ON THE GOSPEL OF ST. JOHN.

The True Service of Christianity to Man.

“VERILY, VERILY, I SAY UNTO THEE, WHEN THOU WAST YOUNG, THOU GIRDEST THYSELF, AND WALKEDST WHITHER THOU Wouldest: BUT WHEN THOU SHALT BE OLD, THOU SHALT STRETCH FORTH THY HANDS, AND ANOTHER SHALL GIRD THEE, AND CARRY THEE WHITHER THOU Wouldest NOT. THIS SPAKE HE, SIGNIFYING BY WHAT DEATH HE SHOULD GLORIFY GOD. AND WHEN HE HAD SPOKEN THIS, HE SAITH UNTO HIM, FOLLOW ME. THEN PETER, TURNING ABOUT, SEETH THE DISCIPLE WHOM JESUS LOVED FOLLOWING; WHICH ALSO LEANED ON HIS BREAST AT SUPPER, AND SAID, LORD, WHICH IS HE THAT BETRAYETH THEE? PETER SEEING HIM SAITH TO JESUS, LORD, AND WHAT SHALL THIS MAN DO? JESUS SAITH UNTO HIM, IF I WILL THAT HE TARRY TILL I COME, WHAT IS THAT TO THEE? FOLLOW THOU ME. THEN WENT THIS SAYING ABROAD AMONG THE BRETHREN, THAT THAT DISCIPLE SHOULD NOT DIE: YET JESUS SAID NOT UNTO HIM, HE SHALL NOT DIE; BUT, IF I WILL THAT HE TARRY TILL I COME, WHAT IS THAT TO THEE?”—*John* xxi. 18-23.

EXPOSITION: Ver. 18.—“*Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdest thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest.*” Peter’s whole life is here included, reaching from youthhood to the verge of old age. In young life there is freedom and force. At this time, perhaps, Peter was in middle life. “*But when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee.*” “This seems to point to his death, which,

tradition says, was by crucifixion. Then is Peter girded by the hand when he is stretched forth on the cross.” —*Tertullian*. It is supposed by some that the expression “*Stretch forth thy hands*” points to his personal surrender previous to being girded by another.

Ver. 19.—“*This spake He, signifying by what death (manner of death, ποίω) he should glorify God.*” This is not a mere prediction of the manner

of his death, but of the honour to be conferred upon him by dying for his Master. "*And when He had spoken this, He saith unto him, Follow Me.*"

"It may be, and the next verse makes it probable, that our Lord withdrew from the circle of the disciples, and by some movement or gesture signified to Peter that he should follow Him; but these words must have had for the Apostle a much fuller meaning. By the side of that lake he had first heard the command, '*Follow Me.*' (Matt. iv. 19.) When sent forth on his apostleship he had been taught that to follow Christ meant to take up the Cross. (Matt. x. 38.) It was his words which drew from Christ the utterance, 'If any man will come after Me let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me.' (Matt. xvi. 23.) To his question at the last supper came the answer, 'Whither I go thou canst not follow Me now, but thou shalt follow Me afterwards' (chap. xiii. 36), and now the command has come again with the prophecy of martyrdom; and it must have carried to his mind the thought that he was to follow the Lord in suffering and death itself, and through the dark path which He had

trodden, was to follow Him to the Father's Home."—*Ellicott's Commentary.*

Ver. 20.—"*Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following.*" This was the beloved disciple John. He was now in the rear pursuing Peter and his Master, hence the expression, "*Peter turning about.*"

Ver. 21.—"*Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do?*" Or, how shall it fare with him?

Ver. 22.—"*Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou Me.*" "From the fact that John alone of the Twelve survived the destruction of Jerusalem, and so witnessed the commencement of that series of events which belong to the last days, many good interpreters think that this is a virtuous prediction of fact, and not a mere supposition; but this is very doubtful, and it seems more natural to consider our Lord as intending to give no positive indication of John's fate at all, but to signify that this was a matter which belonged to the Master of both, who would disclose or conceal it as He thought proper, and that Peter's part was to mind his

own affairs. Accordingly in 'Follow thou Me' the word 'thou' is emphatic. Observe the absolute disposal of human life which Christ claims."—*Dr. Brown.*

Ver. 23.—"Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that

that disciple should not die," &c. This was the inference drawn from the words of the Saviour. Strange that the disciples of Christ should thus misinterpret the meaning of their Master ; but with the best men there is no infallibility of judgment.

HOMILETICS.—This striking incident we shall homiletically employ to illustrate *the true service of Christianity to man*. On all hands men ask, of what real use is Christianity to mankind? Some say it is a *positive injury*. They say it has warped the judgment of mankind, nurtured morbid sentimentality, sectionised society, reared the throne of spiritual despotism, and served the ends of superstition and tyranny. They point to the famous stakes and inquisitions of past ages, and to the property that even now is wrung from the toil of the struggling population. Some say it has *done some good as well as much evil*. It is one of the many elevating forces, and nothing more. Some maintain that *it does everything for man*, that there is nothing good in the world but Christianity, nothing good in science, in nature, or in the best thoughts of mankind.

It is not, therefore, unreasonable or wrong to ask what is its *real service*? We shall use the incident before us to give a negative and a positive reply.

I.—THE NEGATIVE. We learn here—

First: That it does not counteract the natural changes in man's physical life. "*When thou wast young*," &c. Notwithstanding Peter's many defects, he was, undoubtedly, a genuine disciple, Christianity had penetrated and permeated his nature, yet he is here foretold of the infirmities of old age, and the infirmities of his old age would incapacitate him from executing his volitions. When thou wast young thou couldst ply the oar in the water, roam the fields, and scale the hills. There was an energy in thy limbs, a flexibility in the movements of thy young frame, by which thou couldst readily execute thy desires. "*But when thou shalt be old*," &c. Age leaves the will in vigour, but steals away the

executive power. Now Christianity will not prevent this natural effect of age. It will not prevent the bloom fading from the cheek, the brightness passing from the eye, the strength from dying out of the limbs. It allows nature to take its course. Christianity neither offers resistance to the regular course of nature, nor an atonement for her violations. This fact shows (1) That physical sufferings are no criteria of the moral states of men. Some of the best men are the greatest sufferers, some of the best men die in the zenith of life. (2) That Christianity respects the ordinances of nature. However deeply you may drink in its spirit, you must physically submit to the laws of physical decay. (3) That if Christians would be physically happy they must attend, like other men, to nature's laws. If you want to be physically happy, it is bootless to sing "the Lord will provide," and to sit down in indolence and sloth.

Secondly: It does not save a man from the social oppressions of life. *"Another shall gird thee and carry thee whither thou wouldest not."* It is here foretold that Peter should die of crucifixion. His hands should be stretched forth, his arms be extended on a cross, and he would be led to a death of violence at which his nature would revolt. About forty years after this, Peter died a martyr. His Christianity did not deliver him from the malice of men, the storm of persecution, and the agonies of a martyr's death. Christianity promises us no escape from the opposition of wicked men; indeed it teaches us to expect it. It teaches us that they who live righteously must suffer persecution. Note (1) That Christianity can do without the favour of the world. (2) It can do without the lives of its most devoted disciples.

Thirdly: It shows that Christianity does not solve the speculative problems of life. *"If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?"* Instead of answering Peter's question, Christ says, *"What is that to thee?"* Many other problems which the events of life force on men Christianity makes no response to. Why was moral evil permitted to break into the universe? Why is vice occupying thrones while virtue lies bleeding in the dust? &c. What is that to thee? There are good reasons why Christianity is silent on such questions. (1) The encouragement of those questions would

strengthen the speculative tendency rather than improve the heart. (2) An answer to such questions would create emotions that would paralyse moral action. (3) An answer to such questions would multiply the forces that divert from practical godliness.

Fourthly: This shows that it does not invest its disciples with infallible judgment. "*Then went this saying abroad among the brethren,*" &c. The disciples fell into a wrong interpretation of our Saviour's meaning. Christianity does clear and strengthen the human judgment, and furnish it with certain great truths to guide it in its investigation: but it does not render it infallible. The dogma of human infallibility in the Church is a wicked invention and a withering bane. The clergy who claim it grow into heartless tyrants: the laity who bow to it become bondsmen and serfs. "The Brethren" made this mistake. We proceed to notice now—

II.—THE POSITIVE. The incident suggests several things that Christianity does do for man.

First: *It enlists the interest of Christ in their history.* What an interest does He display towards His disciples. Both before and after His resurrection He sought to impress them with the fact that there was the closest spiritual relationship existing between Him and them, that He was vitally identified with them. He calls them His brethren, and teaches that kindness shown to them He regarded as kindness shown to Himself. Is not this something? Is it not a transcendent good to enlist the interest of the Maker and Master of the universe in our history? (1) Having His interest you have the interest of One who knows the whole of the present, past, and future of your inner and outer life. (2) Having His interest you have the interest of One who has ample power so to control the events of the outward life, and supply the aspirations of the mind, as to crown your existence with perfect blessedness.

Secondly: It enables them to *honour God in their daily life.* Ecclesiastical history testifies that Peter suffered martyrdom by crucifixion at Rome, in the reign of the Emperor Nero,

probably in the year 65. It is added, that this death, and the torture connected with it, were endured by the venerable apostle with marvellous patience and fortitude, and that deeming himself unworthy to die in precisely the same manner and posture as his Lord, he asked and obtained permission to be crucified with the head downward, a posture which could not fail greatly to aggravate the tortures of the cross. How does the death of a true disciple "*glorify God?*" (1) The event illustrates the *mercy* of God. Visit the death-bed of a genuine disciple, the unruffled calmness, the devout gratitude, the happy resignation, and sometimes the triumphant rapture displayed frequently in the midst of physical anguish radiate the mercy of Him who would not that the least of His little ones should perish. (2) The event illustrates the *faithfulness* of God. His Word abounds with promises to be with people in all their trials, and in the dying experience of His people the promise is evermore fulfilled. Is not this something? Something, to be enabled to do in death what is the supreme aim of the highest seraph—to glorify God?

Thirdly: It gives a definiteness *and an attraction to all the duties of life*. What theories of human duty ethical sages have propounded! How voluminous is the code of human laws! But Christianity reduces all duties to these words, "*follow thou Me.*" To cherish My spirit, tread in My footsteps, copy My attributes, constitute the totality of human duty, and the perfection of human character. Christianity gives you duty, not in any proposition, but in a fascinating life; not in the life of an angel; but in the life of a man. In Jesus Christ we see it in the most *perfect*, the most *attractive*, and the most *practicable* forms. Is this nothing? Is it nothing to have all our moral problems thus solved? to be freed from cumbrous codes and endless speculations, to have the whole duty of man thus brought to us in the life of a man? *

* For amplification of these points see *Homilist* Vol. V., page 181.

NOTES ON THE EPISTLE OF JAMES.

 "Respect of Persons."

Chapter ii. 1-4.—"MY BRETHREN, HOLD NOT THE FAITH OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, THE LORD OF GLORY, WITH RESPECT OF PERSONS. FOR IF THERE COME INTO YOUR ASSEMBLY A MAN WITH A GOLD RING, IN FINE CLOTHING, AND THERE COME IN ALSO A POOR MAN IN VILE CLOTHING; AND YE HAVE REGARD TO HIM THAT WEARETH THE FINE CLOTHING, AND SAY, SIT THOU HERE IN A GOOD PLACE; AND YE SAY TO THE POOR MAN, STAND THOU THERE, OR SIT UNDER MY FOOTSTOOL; ARE YE NOT DIVIDED IN YOUR OWN MIND, AND BECOME JUDGES WITH EVIL THOUGHTS?"

THIS is a specimen of *practical* preaching, it is a specimen of *personal* preaching: *practical*, because it is the enforcement of a duty; *personal*, because it is the enforcement of a duty upon the men who themselves have been setting it at nought. Practical preaching is necessarily personal preaching; the duty enforced must be the special duty needing to be enforced: that is, the duty which is, or which is in danger of being ignored. A preacher may at great length, and with much ability and earnestness, expose and warn against some special breach of the law, and so far be entitled to the honourable name of a preacher of righteousness; but if the people he speaks to be in no way liable to this breach of the law, if they be not exposed to its temptations, or if in the course of Christian training they have risen above such temptations, then to a great extent, at least, he must lose his labour; the thing he has been speaking against lies outside of the practical life of his hearers, and they may go away home, every one of them, condemning the sin that has been condemned, but not one of them with the arrow of conviction in his own heart, not one of them

Preach
to your own
generation.

feeling the eye of the prophet upon him, or hearing his voice sounding through his inmost soul the "Thou art the man!" There are sins condemned, for example, in the Old Testament which a preacher might comment upon in the hearing of a modern congregation, Sabbath after Sabbath, and yet scarcely ever call forth from any heart the silent confession of blameworthy participation; they are forms, or they are aggravations of evil to which, now-a-days, and with the pronounced condemnation of ages upon them, men generally are not drawn, or in danger of falling before. Why spend time denouncing or warning against such? It is the sins the people commit, are tempted to commit, the sins they need to be helped to struggle against, these it is to which the preacher of righteousness will be careful to give heed.

Suppose a preacher of this stamp, called upon to address by word or letter a congregation, or congregations, where the members were prone to speak unadvisedly with their lips, where they were slow to hear and swift to speak, where they gave the reins to, not "bridling their own tongues"; where, while loud in their professions of love to God, they were woefully wanting in that love to man which is its best evidence, and where in their dealings the one with the other, or in their more formal assemblies, they allowed their prejudices or their fears so far to control them in their treatment of each other that they became respecters of persons; suppose a preacher like this, in circumstances like these, well, he would be tender, he would be conciliatory, he would be full of unfailing interest in their welfare, but he would be practical and personal; he would speak to them of what they most needed to hear; he would "lay bare the baseness of accredited sins," of sins which, indulging in, they did not see all the evil, sins which, if they would but look at, they would see to be wholly opposed to the faith they held, the faith of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory. Such a preacher would speak of the bridling of the tongue, of visiting the fatherless and the widow, of judging every man, not according to shows and appearances, but according to righteousness, charity, and truth; not

with respect of persons, but without partiality and without hypocrisy. James was such a preacher; the Holy Spirit speaking by him is such a preacher; the congregations to which the Holy Spirit speaks now, has been speaking ever since, have not yet outgrown these same sins, and therefore have not outgrown the need of the same preaching: and, that man, that congregation is very far advanced indeed in all true godliness, which does not need to have again and again set forth such practical, personal exhortations as this: "My brethren, hold not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons."

At the outset let it be carefully noted what this exhortation really means, for it may be that a man may be suspected of the sin of "respect of persons" when he is furthest from it. In the formation of friendships, for example, there is respect of persons, a choice of, a selection from, persons; there is, or there may be, the deliberate rejection of, the deliberate choice of some persons, but there is nothing wrong in this, it is innocent, it is praiseworthy. Our Lord had twelve disciples, and of those twelve disciples there were three in whom He had special pleasure, whom He had most frequently about Him, and to whom He most freely and most fully made Himself known. Of these three there was one nearer than the other two admitted furthest into His secrets, pre-eminently the disciple "whom Jesus loved." If any of the outer circle, jealous of the nearness of these three, of James or Peter, jealous of the nearness of John to the common Master, had thought of Him as being a respecter of persons it would have been an evil thought; and yet there was in His treatment of them something of the nature of respect of, choice of, selection from among persons. In the due deference, again, which is given to those in authority, to those who are placed, or whom we have placed over us, there is necessarily respect of persons, but this, instead of being blameworthy, is made matter of special obligation. "Let every soul be subject to the higher powers: honour to whom honour; let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour."

The wrong "respect of persons" will best be seen by looking at the apostle's illustration here, the case of the gold-ringed man, who just because he is a gold-ringed man gets such deference

What it is. paid to him, and that of the squalidly clad man

who, just because he is squalidly clad, gets such scant courtesy. The apostle gives his instance very graphically; he had seen the thing take place. The service of the assembly had just begun, everybody was in his seat, when suddenly there was quite a commotion; at the door, just inside of the upper room where they were meeting, there stood a well-dressed somebody and an ill-dressed nobody. Both had come in together, and they needed to be accommodated with seats somewhere before the services should further be proceeded with. Mark what follows! Instead of showing each of them to a place where he might enjoy the service quietly, treating them equally as brethren in the Lord, the elders, or deacons, deferentially invited the rich man to one of the best seats, a prominent seat where he could see and be seen, while they unceremoniously told the poor man to *stand*, or to stand just where he could get standing room, whether he could hear well or no, or to find a seat somewhere in some out-of-the-way place befitting his insignificance. "For if there come into your assembly," &c. The illustration illustrates the thing illustrated. These two men had equal right to a welcome reception in that assembly, for each of them was a brother in the Lord, and each of them ought to have been treated as a brother beloved, for each of them was a brother man, and each of them ought to have been welcomed to partake of the hospitalities of that place where there is neither bond nor free, rich nor poor. But this was not the treatment they got, this was not the welcome. Show in the one case, the absence of show in the other; wealth in the one case, poverty in the other, presented themselves, and, for the sake of the external glitter, the one was deferred to where the other was despised; that is to say, there was respect of one person to the disrespect of another person who had the same right to whatever respect might be shown. It is where the unjust respect of another comes in that the evil begins, it is in this the sin consists. In the

outside world this is called favouritism; when some specially nefarious instance of it occurs it is called jobbery, as, for example, when one who has neither the claim of merit or of service shall be promoted for purely party purposes over the head of another whose merits and services all men recognise, or as where place and preferment, which rightly are open to all, are bestowed upon merely relatives and friends, sons, and nephews and cousins. Favouritism in the world, respect of persons in the church; inconsistent with righteousness, inconsistent with the faith of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory.

It is the inconsistency of it all the apostle feels and deplores. It is inconsistent with the plainest dictates of justice, as it is written not only in the Scriptures but "on the red-leaved tablets of the heart as well." "Thou shalt not respect the

It is
inconsistent
with the
faith
of Christ.

persons of the poor nor honour the mighty, but in righteousness shall thou judge thy neighbour, thou shalt not respect persons in judgment, but hear the small as well as great." It is flagrantly inconsistent

with the faith of the Lord of glory, the religion He promulgated, the example He ever gave. How unlike His example, the example even His enemies testified to: "Master, we know that Thou art true, neither carest Thou for any man for Thou regardest not the person of men." How opposed to the spirit of Him who did not grasp at the signs of equality with God, as if these were something to be snatched at, but "made Himself of no reputation," for our sakes "became poor." How unlike the faith of Jesus, the faith which enters into relationship with Him on the express ground that all men are alike in His sight, that in Him respect of persons cannot exist. It is this which touches the apostle most deeply: it is this which makes him so tenderly and urgently exhort: My beloved brethren, do not hold, do not think you can hold the faith of the Lord Jesus Christ in the sphere of what is so repugnant to the spirit of it, so contradictory to the simplest elements of it, in the sphere of respect of persons.

It is this again which when He has let them see the enormity of it in its own proper guise, he bids them look at, and enquire of themselves whether, when they are guilty of the like of it, they

are not wavering in their faith and becoming like the evil-thoughted judges of the world outside, guilty of favouritism. "Are ye not partial in yourselves?" or rather, are ye not wavering in yourselves, wavering in your faith, for who could hold that faith, hold it all, hold it clearly and yet be a respecter of persons? It cannot be, you are wavering, you are letting the faith slip from you, if you thus judge. The sphere in which **Wavering Minds.** respect of persons obtains is outside of the faith of the Lord Jesus Christ, and a man cannot be in both at one and the same time, he must leave the one when he enters the other. And *he* wavers, and becomes a judge of evil thoughts, an evil-thoughted judge who holding the faith of the Lord Jesus Christ is a respecter of persons.

The instance the apostle adduces is where the rich man is unjustly preferred before the poor man, and as human nature is, happens most frequently, but it not seldom happens that respect of persons is manifested in the quite opposite direction, and a rich man shall be unjustly set aside and denied his proper rights, his legitimate influence in the Church, simply from an unreasoning prejudice, and poorer members for no other reason but that they are poor, however ignorant or unfit, preferred before him: forgetting that justice is even-handed and the faith of Christ no less so, and that it is as much an infringement of the one as the other to respect the person of the poor, or to honour the person of the mighty. In most cases, however, it is the rich, the high in rank or in station to whom this respect is shown, and it has been to the detriment of the faith of the Lord Jesus Christ, from the apostle's day to our own, that in churches and in church courts, in pulpit rebuke and in private remonstrance, the rich man has so frequently been able to congratulate himself that "money answereth all things." The annals of the Church contain many parallels to the apostle's instance of respect of persons.

And yet there are many noble instances to the contrary, where the church has rebuked iniquity in high places, testifying that the religion of Christ is no respecter of persons. (John Howe, and rebukes and warnings in the case of Cromwell.

Robert South, in the case of the gilded reprobates of the Court of Charles II.)

(1) This is not a word of private interpretation, it is not for one class of hearers only; not for office-bearers as opposed to private members; not for the rich as apart from the poor; not for teacher as over against taught; it is for each and for all; and that church will come nearest to the mind of Christ where the conduct of every member is guided by the love which lies at the heart of the principle of the apostle's warning, that respect of persons contradicts and contemns the faith of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory.

(2) In religious matters, regard men from the religious point of view. How would this sound? "I think of you highly as a person of artistic taste, because you have fine walls to hang pictures on, and plenty of money to buy them!" And yet it is not an unusual thing! Members of churches are ridiculed because they make much of rich men, mere rich men, and they deserve all the ridicule that can be cast upon them; but do not artists, authors, do the same; and is not a rich man's, a mere rich man's discriminating taste a much truer thing than a poor man's? The fact is, it is not special to any class: it is common to human nature to be glamoured with show; only it is more odious in the church-member, because of his special relation to Him who "became poor."

(3) In every sphere let every man have the respect he deserves in the thing for which he deserves it. This rich man, whom it would be utterly out of place to make much of in a church, it may be but just to put in the first place at a political meeting. Has he done good work in this? "Honour to whom honour."

GLASGOW.

PETER RUTHERFORD.

Sympathy is a sort of substitution by which we are put in the place of another man, and affected in many respects as he is affected."—
EDMUND BURKE.

Germs of Thought.

Man, not his Soul only, Redeemed.

“THE GOD OF PEACE HIMSELF SANCTIFY YOU WHOLLY;
AND MAY YOUR SPIRIT AND SOUL AND BODY BE PRESERVED ENTIRE,
WITHOUT BLAME AT THE COMING OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.”
—1 *Thess.* v. 23. (*R.V.*)

THE three changes made in this verse by the Revisers are changes of translation only; the Greek text is unaltered. They are changes unanimously adopted; there is no alternative rendering in the margin. Two of them are of small consequence, the other is a great gain. It gives clearness to our view of what is the breadth and scope of the work of our Lord in redemption.

It is not “my soul” for which Christ died, yea, rather is risen again,—it is “me;” He loved “me,” and gave Himself for “me.” Modern philosophy, and a good deal of popular leaflet theology, have worked together for evil in obscuring the purpose of God’s grace. Philosophy, most falsely so called, has been doing its best to weaken the sense of the individuality and the resulting responsibility of each of us; and tracts and leaflets in thousands and tens of thousands have taught men to think of their “souls” as all of themselves for which Christ shed His precious blood. Strange companions these, but their companionship is accidental and temporary. Neither of these parties are where they will be; each by the attraction of its master principle will be drawn to its own place.

The governing word of this verse is the word “entire.” It is found in one other place in the New Testament in precisely the same meaning (James i. 4), perfect and “entire,” “lacking,” that is, “in nothing.” The Greek for it is “*holokteros*,” and it is a very interesting word. “It signifies, first, that which retains all that was allotted to it at the first; . . . next, that integrity

of body with nothing redundant—nothing deficient which was required of the Levitical priests as a condition of their ministering at the altar.”—*Archbp. Trench*, “*Synonyms of the Greek Text*,” p. 74, Ed. 9.

It was only a natural enlargement of its scope when it took in mental and spiritual characteristics, and stood out as the moral image of “integrity,” forbidding, under the highest penalties, any sundering of what God had blended together, the physical, the mental, the spiritual nature of man.

In the Jewish Church, when God taught men by object-lessons, this religious integrity was insisted upon with merciful severity. No priest might take part in the special work of the priests who was “a blind man, or lame, or that had a flat nose, or anything superfluous.” No dwarf, no deformed or mis-formed man might minister at the altar, or before the veil; he might not touch burnt-offering or meat-offering, save to eat his portion of the bread of his God. No penalty lay upon him save this, that his deformity cut him off from being in holy things a representative man before God and the people.

Under the Christian dispensation, when all are priests, the lesson is obvious. The law demanded in its priests bodily integrity, that the gospel might demand from its priests spiritual integrity. Our Lord was made flesh and dwelt among us, and all that belongs to the essence of man’s nature as our Lord took it, lives and shall live in Him.

Integrity of body, soul, and spirit to us who live and move and have our being in Christ is absolutely necessary to the fulfilment of our “service” as “priests.”

There are sins against the body. Intemperance, insobriety, unchastity. In a deep and abiding sense they mutilate the body. Many a Christian man, pardoned and washed and sanctified, “enters into life maimed,” with bitter memories of the sins of his youth mingling with the hallelujahs that, by God’s grace, he yet utters.

There are sins against the mind. Many a good man dwarfs

and stunts and cripples his mind. Some do this deliberately, holding the intellect in disesteem. That is self-inflicted blindness.

"'Tis life, not death, for which we pant,
'Tis life whereof our nerves are scant,
More life and fuller that we want."

And light to a Christian is life. "I am the light of the world," says He who made it. No knowledge puffs up what Christ imparts and sanctifies.

There is a bastard knowledge that does "puff up." Witness the great philosopher who knew the difference well. "Doth any man doubt that if there were taken out of men's minds vain opinions, flattering hopes, false valuations, imaginations as one would, and the like, but it would leave the minds of a number of men poor shrunken things, full of melancholy and indisposition, and unpleasing to themselves."

But the light of the body is the eye, and the light of the soul is the intellect, and if the eye be single, the whole soul shall be full of light.

There are sins against the spirit; sins against our own spirit, sins that vex and grieve the Spirit of God. All sins that disfigure and distort the lower parts of our nature do violence and wrong to the higher part. God has tempered the parts together, and "you" and "I" are the indivisible result. We speak of harsh and crabbed Christians, of obstinate and wilful Christians, of narrow and prejudiced Christians, of fierce and vehement and bitter Christians.

Here are indeed things "blemished," things "superfluous." A crooked temper is a worse disqualification for the priesthood than a "crooked back;" a dull, heavy, flat, earthly spirit is a greater hindrance than "a flat nose;" and what can be to a Christian more "superfluous" than the bitter waters of strife and division with which sadly too often he overflows. But the defect which robs us of our "entirety" is found for the most part in one of these three things—

(a) "*In knowledge.*" "Jesus increased" in it, and so ought we.

The Scribe instructed to the kingdom of heaven brings out of his treasure things new and old, and that Scribe is most likely to bring out something new who has made best use of what is old, save always that what our Lord means by "new" is not what we call a novelty. He whose nature has assimilated the bread of life shall himself be honoured to break loaves to the multitude.

(b) *Then we are often defective in "feeling."* If our eyes, "anointed with eye salve," look often and look humbly at Him whom we have pierced, we shall not "lack" the tears that bedew the soul, and if the "anointing," the "chrism" of the Holy Spirit be upon us, we shall be moved with Christ's compassion when we in our turn go forth and see the multitudes. "One thing thou lackest" may indeed be said to him who is defective in tender, deep, patient, persevering compassion.

(c) *What we know and feel are the parents of what we "do."* Passive habits grow feeble; activity—useful beneficent activity—is the flower of Christian life in its human manifestations. Tears, idle tears, we know not what they mean. "What shall I do, Lord?" is a petition that should never be lacking in our daily prayer; and still, for most of us, God answers that prayer in the old way,—*"Arise, go into the city."*—

"Farewell, farewell, the heart that lives alone
Housed in a dream, at distance from the kind,"

but no farewell must we utter, to neighbour or to work, till God relieves us of duty to our neighbourhood, and gives the sign that signifies that we may rest. But if no record of work has gone before, if none follow, and we arrive at last empty and alone, sadly answering—

"We bring
Only ourselves, we lost
Sight of the rest in the storm;"

what an irreparable lack is there!

Christ has brought us knowledge from the bosom of the Father, and kindled love in ours, but He has called us also to

share His work ; and as God gave Him to become perfect man that He might do that work, so it is only in the completeness of our ransomed nature that we can fully accomplish ours. We must address ourselves to men, and not to men's souls only ; and

“ Eyes will re-kindle and prayers
Follow our steps as we go,”

we shall

“ Fill up the gaps in our files, .
Strengthen the wavering line ;
Stablish, continue our march,
On to the bound of the waste,
On to the city of God.”

HIGH BRAY.

W. J. EDMONDS.

Pilate's Wife.

“ AND WHILE HE WAS SITTING ON THE JUDGMENT-SEAT, HIS WIFE SENT UNTO HIM, SAYING, HAVE THOU NOTHING TO DO WITH THAT RIGHTEOUS MAN : FOR I HAVE SUFFERED MANY THINGS THIS DAY IN A DREAM BECAUSE OF HIM.”—*Matthew* xxvii. 19.

INTRODUCTION : short sketch of the life of Pilate, noticing the Roman method of governing provinces. We notice—

I.—Pilate's wife is one of the many obscure persons who have been made conspicuous in history through circumstances connected with the name of our Lord. How little did she think, when she despatched her servant with the message to her husband, that she was procuring for herself a place in history, which the hand of time, through nineteen centuries, could not take away from her. She was a notable person in her day, because of her husband's prominent position. She was no doubt conscious of her greatness, as most people are whose greatness depends upon social standing. It was not this, however, that has since made

her famous. It is the lustre of our Lord's name that redeems her from the darkness of the remote time in which she lived. She would have been forgotten long ago, as millions of others, as great and greater than she, have been forgotten, had she not connected herself with the name of Jesus Christ. Now, as long as history remains Pilate's wife will be remembered. This is the case with many others. What should we have known of Joseph, the country carpenter, if he had not become the husband of the mother of our Lord? What should we have known of Mary herself but for her relationship to Jesus? And the few men, who became His first scholars, would have remained unknown and unnoticed save by their own little family circles and their few acquaintances, but that they joined themselves to the great Teacher; but through their connexion with Him all these, and many more, have become famous, historic personages. The names that occur in the Gospel history are familiar to every school child in the civilised world, because in some way or other they became connected with the name of Christ. Just as a lighted candle gives a circle of light and makes every object within the circle visible, so Christ, as a Person of history, is the centre of a circle of historic light, and all who came within that circle will be visible to the eyes of the world to the end of time. But Christ is not only a centre of historic light, He is a centre, also, of moral and spiritual light. As a character of history He has redeemed from historic oblivion many a name that would otherwise have been unknown. But those who come within the sphere of His moral and spiritual light will be redeemed from a far worse oblivion. Historic fame will, perhaps, last as long as time lasts, and Christ has given that to many; but when the days of this old world are over He will say to those who lived here in the light of the Gospel of His love,—“Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you,” &c. Historic renown is a poor thing in comparison with the moral and spiritual glory that Christ can give. Our names may be redeemed from a far worse darkness than that of the world's forgetfulness, if we will bring ourselves within the range of Christ's spiritual light,

II.—Dreams are very wonderful. The Old Testament abounds in dream-stories, and, as the text witnesses, they are not ignored in the New. There is, however, generally a strong element of superstition in people who make much of dreams, or who allow their dreams much to affect them. Pilate's wife was, undoubtedly, superstitious, as most people of her class were; but her superstition did not avail to save The Christ. Superstition never has served Christ's cause, and never can. Some sections of the Church seem to imagine, even now, that Christ's Kingdom can be forwarded by it. It is a mistake. We need the plain, reasonable Gospel, baptized in the glow of fervent piety and devotion, but not in the deceiving font of superstition. Indeed, superstition is really a barrier to the Church's progress; perhaps more so even than scepticism.

III.—Pilate's wife acted the part of a true wife and a true friend in sending this message to her husband. She was impressed with the fact that Jesus was a "righteous man," and that it would be a wrong thing, and a thing that, because of its wrongness, would bring them pain if they implicated themselves in bringing suffering upon Him. Let us not allow those whom we love to go into sin without an earnest word of warning, without an effort to stop them. Many have been ruined because they were honestly able to say—"No man careth for my soul."

(a) We must not confound this duty with a censorious, judging disposition. It is one thing to tell a brother gently and kindly of his dangers, another to assume the position of critic and judge.

(b) Neither are we to make our brother's sins matters of gossip. Remember the contempt with which Christ treated the loud-voiced accusations against the poor, fallen woman. When she was *alone* with Him He spoke to her. Let that be our plan.

(c) Let us speak gently and tenderly as He did, assuming no harsh superiority. Let us remind the erring how that by going on in sin they "crucify the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame." Earnestly let us beg them to have nothing to do with wounding "that righteous man."

IV.—Even a heathen woman speaks of Christ as "that

righteous man." How fitting the epithet! Christ was, and is, supremely "that righteous man." He is righteous in His judgments, righteous in His estimate of character. Remember, "that righteous man" has formed His estimate of us. The world may have a very wrong opinion of us. It may think us worse or better than we are, but, "that righteous man" makes no mistake. It is His judgment of us that will affect our future, our eternal destiny. So that the wisest thing we can do, and this is putting religion on a very low ground, is to seek to gain His good opinion. Even if now the world smile upon us, and fondle us, and make much of us, a day is coming when all that will be useless, and His approval will be the only thing of any worth. But let not considerations of this kind be our constraining motive. See Him as He stands accused before Pilate's bar, when the message from the judge's wife is brought; follow Him from there to the awful cross, and remember it was love, all-conquering, eternal love that brought Him thither, and let that love constrain us.

MORETON-IN-MARSH.

J. KIRK PIKE.

Absolute Safety in Christ.

"THERE IS THEREFORE NOW NO CONDEMNATION TO THEM WHICH ARE IN CHRIST JESUS, WHO WALK NOT AFTER THE FLESH, BUT AFTER THE SPIRIT."—*Romans* viii. 1.

ONE of the most important questions that can engage the mind is, How can man be just with God? To get into harmony with Divine righteousness, to be at peace with and please God, wed holiness and happiness together. This the peculiar charm and value of the Gospel, that it reveals how sins may be forgiven,—the favour of God secured. The apostle gloried in the doctrine of justification by faith in Christ; he never tired of expatiating upon its excellencies and blessings. He had an overwhelming

sense of the depravity of human nature,—felt himself to be a “wretched man” under weight of a “body of death”; yet, when he remembered Christ, and what He had done for man to remove sin and ensure salvation, the tone of his language became changed from gloom to gladness. All the consequences of sin could be escaped; victory over every spiritual foe had been achieved by the sinners’ surety. The fact that Christ had died; yea, rather, had risen again, gave full assurance of absolute safety. What a holy calm here settles upon the apostle’s heart. He feels he is “*in Christ Jesus*,” and can challenge the visible and invisible universe to move him. The comfort of the text is for all true Christly souls, and, to enjoy it, constitutes the blessedness of the Christian life. The text brings before us—

I.—THE INCOMPARABLE POSITION CHRISTIAN BELIEVERS OCCUPY. “In Christ Jesus.” This expression is in keeping with what our blessed Lord said about those who become His disciples, in parable of Vine and branches. The truth may also be *illustrated* by reference to Noah’s safety in ark; manslayer’s security in city of refuge. To be “*in Christ*,” means—in His *hands, thoughts, company, confidence, heart*; to possess Him, and *to be possessed by Him*; to live in the circle of His love, embrace of His power, sunshine of His face. For a few fleeting years we have a dwelling-place in these frail bodies, they link us with sin and death. Oh, to feel we have a spiritual dwelling-place that will never fail us! There can be no higher dignity than to dwell in Christ Jesus; there is no position so glorious. No wonder the highest ambition of the apostle was “*to be found in Him*.” To be in Christ now, is the preparation for being with Him for ever when absent from the body and ushered into the unseen and eternal world.

II.—THE INESTIMABLE BLESSINGS CHRISTIAN BELIEVERS ENJOY. “No condemnation.” *This does not mean there is no accusation*; for Satan and our own hearts will accuse and seek to condemn. The believer may, many a time, be almost overwhelmed by fears and doubts; but *the fact remains*, “there is no condemnation,” &c. *This does not mean that there will be no ill deserts*; for the life will not be perfect, there will be a constant falling short of the

glory of God. *Sanctification*—which is a progressive thing—follows justification. We are free from condemnation, because our Surety has died and satisfied the claims of Divine justice for us. “No condemnation,” then (a) *We can look back with joy.* All that has been wrong in the past has been forgiven; the demands of the law have been met, atonement has been accepted. (b) *We can look around.* No officer of justice ready to arrest us, no sword of judgment ready to fall upon us. (c) *We can look forward and upward.* The grave, the judgment-seat, have no terrors for those who realize the blessedness of my text, for God will glorify those whom He justifies. “No condemnation” is but the *negative side* of salvation. *There is a positive side*; for we are not only freed from death, but lifted into life; not only saved from punishment, but admitted into perfect and perpetual bliss.

III.—THE INFALLIBLE EVIDENCE BY WHICH WE MAY KNOW WHETHER OR NOT SUCH POSITION AND BLESSEDNESS ARE OURS. “Who walk not,” &c. These words have been omitted in Revised Version, but we may take them and use them here as embodying truths frequently expressed elsewhere. Those who are in Christ Jesus walk not after the flesh, they are not under the dominion of their animal appetites and passions; they seek for masterhood over all that is carnal, and to be under sovereign sway of spiritual influences. The mark of a worldling is that he walks after the flesh, lives for the present and self-gratification. The believer is led by the Spirit of God, and thus has evidence that he is the son of God and joint heir with Christ.

CONCLUSION.—Have we obeyed the invitation of Christ,—come to Him? Is there a mutual indwelling,—Christ in us, we in Him? Which do we mind more, earthly or heavenly things? Are we under the domination of the flesh or the Spirit? The weakest believer is safe “in Christ Jesus.” Our complete salvation does not depend on our frames and feelings, but on vital and abiding union with Him who died for our sins and rose again for our justification. Not to be “in Christ,” is to be without pardon, peace, heaven. None need perish, for Christ is able and willing to save to the uttermost.

CLIFTON.

FREDERICK W. BROWN.

The Astonishing Love.

“BEHOLD, WHAT MANNER OF LOVE THE FATHER HATH BESTOWED UPON US, THAT WE SHOULD BE CALLED THE SONS OF GOD : THEREFORE THE WORLD KNOWETH US NOT, BECAUSE IT KNEW HIM NOT.”
—1 *John* iii. 1.

THE Love of God is the one theme of the Bible. All other themes are subordinate to and attend on it.

The New Testament utterances upon it are shared principally by Christ, Paul, and John. Each one sets it forth in an aspect most attractive to himself.

Christ, Himself the gift—in manifestation of God’s love—lays the emphasis upon the *wondrous gift*—“God so loved the world that He gave *His only begotten Son*.”

Paul is astonished at the depth to which it reaches. He sees humankind down on the lowest plane, and exults thus,—“When we were enemies” Christ died for us.

John’s eagle eye penetrated to the height to which it raises the fallen race. It lifts from the gate of hell to the family circle of the Everlasting Father,—“called sons of God.”

A Danish missionary and a Malabarian convert were translating this passage into the native tongue. The convert said, “It is too much, allow me to render it,—‘They shall be permitted to kiss His feet.’”

There is much in *John’s* astonishment. Judge of John by his incisive philosophical Gospel. His emblem was the eagle, yet he was astonished. The remainder of the chapter suggests that those to whom he wrote were asleep to this exalted honour and blessing. This preparatory “Behold!” is his clarion note, designed to arouse and arrest them. Thousands to-day need just such a startling “Behold!” Given to religion, but know nothing about this surprising honour and blessing experimentally,

I.—WHO? II.—WHAT?

I.—WHO? The answer is “We.” (1) *The pronouns “we” and “us,” bear the weight of the passage.* Had the inspiration been “Michael,” “Gabriel,” “Angels” are sons of God, John might

neither have felt astonishment or grudging. They are worthy, would have been his response—worthy in nature, worthy in service—Such conferment would have been in harmony with the proprieties of earth and Heaven..

(2) *The apostle was not limiting the “we” to those faithful, happy souls rejoicing with him in God, but was thinking of himself and them as members of a common humanity.* Remembering the hole of the pit from which he, with others, had been digged—“We,” what are we at our best? The least said the better. Every honest heart echoes that. We dare only to look upon our best.

As Rowland Hill saw a criminal going to suffer the extreme penalty of the law, he exclaimed, “There goes Rowland Hill but for the grace of God.”

“We.” To understand the force of that “we” we must look out upon the world of men—men away from churches, men stripped of borrowed morality, in their stark godlessness, see ourselves closely allied to basest unmitigated debauching, murdering his fellows—sad truth—unpalatable fact—Is he not our brother? We differ not from him by nature. We have one fallen, vitiated flesh. Take in this full, round, unexaggerated aspect of it, and we get into sympathy with John’s feeling of astonishment “that we should be called the sons of God.” Astonishing love! This is the full stretch of it.

“Deeper than hell, it plucked me thence,
Deeper than inbred sin.”

II.—WHAT? Answer “Called sons of God.”

(1) *More than was comprehended in heathen verse, “Are we not all His offspring?”* More than we have reached when we have run up the Evangelist’s chronologic line to “Adam, which was the son of God.” All men are the sons of God; hence the prodigal is a son though lost, though dead. This is the relation of creature to Creator. John speaks of something far more excellent.

(2) Try it by the world’s rule—*What is it worth?* Is it anything more than empty title. Yes! Yes! There is estate to match it—sons! children! So on. Heirs! “Heirs of God, joint heirs with Jesus Christ.”

(3) *What the estate?* Earth's precious things? (a) *Gold? Riches? Lands?* These are sometimes given. "Godliness is profitable unto all things," &c., but these are not scheduled in the conveyance. These are not always good. To some they are replete with danger. (b) *What the estate?* *The unseen kingdom of Christ*—peace, joy, heavenly knowledge, Divine fellowship, eternal life, power,—how much? Royalty! a throne! Glory! (c) But above all this, *the relationship*. Carnal advantage is often the sole charm of filial relationship. A fig for the natural bond if its significance is not golden. Relationship that can be mortgaged is esteemed. Alas, that it is so! The tie of nature, the oneness of life should be the charm. My Father! My Mother! is estate sufficient for the filial. "Children of God!"

(4) *Anything more?* *Yea, more beyond measure.* "It doth not yet appear what we shall be." Paul said things seen taught of things unseen—the present of the future. John speaks here as if figures failed him; that nothing on earth, not even Christian experience, assisted him to comprehend the saint's future. Christian stature differs. There are Christian souls little enough, and little enough blessed. Very little inspiration or even pious desire would have started the suggestion of something better awaiting the true, the holy; but John would say the same on the highest reach of Christian life,—"It doth not yet appear," &c. Something better for even the brightest and best of the "sons of God."

APPLICATION.—The poor, indigent, and godly are not without estate. Earth's estate is small enough, but if this is your rejoicing you have raiment that covers and gold that maketh rich: an inheritance incorruptible, &c., is yours. No damaging influences can assail it, no moral blight touch it, or shadow darken it. In itself sound at the core, and everlasting also by the will of God.

We are sometimes looked upon as commoners, without position, diploma, or rank. Fret not that your blood is not esteemed as purple, or that among men your place is in the back rank. Earthly appendages are only tinsel—they must all be relinquished

at the grave. Commoners are we? Verily "the world knoweth us not." We belong to the aristocracy of Heaven, the noble-blooded of the skies. Believer, make up to this fulness of joy. Sinner on the look out for chances, do not miss this.

MORPETH.

JOHN HOGG.

Sin the Great Separator.

"YOUR INIQUITIES HAVE SEPARATED BETWEEN YOU AND YOUR GOD."—*Isaiah* lix. 2.

It is no less the teaching of the prophet and of the apostle than of the poet, that

"Sin brought death into our world, and all our woe."

But how compute the number of griefs comprised in "all our woe?" The more we know of the sorrows of the world around us, the more we feel how ruinous beyond all words is the influence that sin has exerted. But of all its terrible achievements I know of none worse than its dividing, separating power.

It was sin that first caused separation between human beings—Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, &c.

Worse still, sin has divided man from God, "Your iniquities have separated," &c. This is true in several senses.

I.—SIN SEPARATES MAN FROM GOD AS TO PLACE. Of course it remains true of every inhabitant of earth, and even of hell, that God is not far from every one of us. But sin has blunted, has even destroyed the sense of His nearness, has led men to feel as though He were far distant. As a man's iniquities increase God seems farther and farther from him, until at last he feels that Heaven is too distant for him to reach, and God too far off to hear his prayers.

II.—SIN SEPARATES MAN FROM GOD AS TO CHARACTER. In the image of God we were first created. He is the great Father of Spirits, and all spirits should sustain a family likeness to Him. But it is not so with men. The image of our Father is defaced

and we bear the image of the earthy. Our character is so unlike the character of God that we shrink from Him, as darkness from light, as night from morning.

III.—SIN SEPARATES MAN FROM GOD AS TO WILL. Separation of will is the most complete of all kinds of separation. Continents and oceans may divide men, and yet they may be one in heart and aim. But let their desires differ, their purposes be opposed, their wills clash, and, though they dwell under one roof and eat at one table, there is between them an effectual separation. This is how it is with the sinner and God. We are rebelling against and resisting *God's* will, and that guilty separation is the fruit of sin.

IV.—SIN SEPARATES MAN FROM GOD AS TO INTEREST. It is to the interest of the sinner that there should be opportunity for indulgence in sin, that the punishment of sin should be removed, that the restraints of virtue should be broken down. We may well rejoice that God's interest is with all that is the opposite of this. It is God's aim that sin should be destroyed. Hence by fearful sufferings He brands it with disgrace.

But God in His wonderful love has taken means to destroy this separation, and to draw us back to Him. Reconciliation, and not the perpetual separation that our sins deserve, is His message to us. St. Paul says, "Ye who sometime were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ." This is the Gospel. Jesus Christ removing the separation our sins have caused between us and God.

Do you feel that God is far from you? In the time of need does He seem so far away that you cannot pray to Him? Seek pardon through Christ.

Do you shrink from God as being unlike you in character? In Christ, God's majesty, wisdom, and power, all flow to us through the focus of His mercy.

Are you separated from God in will and in interest? Again I say, come to Christ. See in His life and in His death God's unutterable love, and ponder it till it conquers you, till your will becomes His, and "ye who sometime were far off are made nigh."

EDITOR.

SEEDS OF SERMONS ON THE SECOND BOOK OF
THE KINGS.

Significant Facts in God's Government.

"IN THE SECOND YEAR OF JOASH," &c.—2 *Kings* xiv.

IN this chapter we have a sketch of a succession of kings both of Judah and Israel. Here are two kings of Judah, Amaziah and Azariah, and Joash, Jeroboam, and his son Zachariah, kings of Israel. The whole chapter suggests certain significant facts in God's government of mankind. The first fact which strikes us is—

I.—THE ENORMOUS FREEDOM OF ACTION WHICH HE ALLOWS WICKED MEN. Here we learn, First: That God allows wicked men to *form wrong conceptions of Himself*. All these kings, although descendants of Abraham, who was a monotheist, became idolaters. "The high places were not taken away, as yet the people did sacrifice, and burnt incense on the high places." Golden calves, symbols of Egyptian worship, were erected at Dan and

Bethuel at the extremities of the dominions. Terribly strange it seems to us that the Almighty Author of the human mind should permit it to think of Him as some material object in nature, or as some production of the human hand. What human father, had he the power, would permit his children to form not only wrong but wicked impressions of himself? For what reason this is permitted I know not. Albeit it shows His practical respect for that freedom of action with which He has endowed us. Here we learn, Secondly: That God allows wicked men *to obtain despotic dominion over others*. All these kings were wicked, Amaziah, Joash, Jeroboam, and Zachariah, and yet they obtained an autocratic dominion over the rights, possessions, and lives of millions.

Here we read of Amaziah slaying ten thousand men, capturing ten thousand prisoners, and taking Selah, the capital of the Edomites, and of Jehohaz, king of Israel, perpetrating great enormities. (Verses 13, 14.) He came to Jerusalem and broke down the wall of Jerusalem, from the gate of Ephraim unto the corner gate. It is said of Jeroboam, who reigned forty-one years, that he "did evil in the sight of the Lord and departed not from the sins of his father." Antecedently one might have concluded that if a wicked man was allowed to live amongst his fellows, he should be doomed to obscurity and to social and political impotence, but it is not so. Why? Who shall answer? Another fact is—

II.—GOD PUNISHES WICKED MEN BY THEIR OWN WICKEDNESS. First: A wicked man is punished by his *own* wickedness. Amaziah's conduct is an example. Elated with his triumph over the Edomites, he sought occasion of war with the king of Israel. He sent messengers to Jehoash, the son of Jehoahaz, son of Jehu, king of Israel,

saying, "Come, let us look one another in the face." &c. (Verses 8-14.) About fifteen years after his defeat he fled from Jerusalem to Lachish to escape assassination, but the assassin pursued him and struck him dead. It is ever so. Wickedness is its own punishment. The wicked passions of a corrupt man are his tormenting devils. Sin is suicidal. Secondly: A wicked man is punished by the *wickedness of others*. The thousands of these despotic kings reduced to anguish, destitution, and death, were idolaters and rebels against Heaven, and by the hand of wicked men they were punished. Thus it ever is: devils are their own tormentors. Sin converts a community of men into tormenting fiends, man becomes the Satan of man.

CONCLUSION.—Learn, First: *Humanity in this world is obviously in a morally abnormal condition.* It can never be that He whose power is immeasurable, whose wisdom and goodness are redolent and radiant everywhere above and below us, could create such a pandemonium as we have here. He originates the good, per-

mits the evil, and will undoubtedly overrule it for good. Secondly: *Faith in a future that shall rectify the evils of the present seems essential to true religion.* Genuine religion is a supreme love for the Supreme Existence. But who could love a supreme existence, who would permit

for ever such a state of existence as we have here. There must come a day of rectification "When the Son of Man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him," &c. (Matt. xxv. 31-46.)

DAVID THOMAS, D.D.
LONDON.

"WHATSOEVER THINGS ARE TRUE."

A Song for the Young.*

BY DAVID THOMAS, D.D.

THOUGH my means may be small, and name quite obscure,
Live only by labour, and dwell 'mid the poor,
I'm resolved upon this, I'll follow it through,
To love and to practise the "things that are true."
The things that are showy are things in request,
The empty and thoughtless regard them as best.
I've pondered the matter, and I will pursue,
Despite of all customs, the "things that are true."

Chorus—I'm resolv'd upon this, and I'll follow it through,
To love and to practise the "things that are true."

The things most imposing are things for the proud;
The pomp and the glitter enamour the crowd;
Pretences and shams I'm resolved to eschew,
And walk in the light of the "things that are true."
Though things most in vogue are the things to insure
Most gold for the pocket, most fame for the hour;
The vain and the greedy, for them they may do,
To me all is worthless but "things that are true."

Chorus—I'm resolv'd, &c.

The "things that are true" are the things that will last,
All seemings will vanish as dreams that are past,
Like clouds that are swept from the face of the sky,
All falsehoods of life they shall melt by-and-by.
The things of a party Heav'n knows how I hate!
The blight of the Church, and the curse of the State;
The minion of cliqueships! what mischief they do!
Avaunt to all canting! All hail to the true!

Chorus—I'm resolv'd, &c.

EREWYN, UPPER TULSE HILL, S.W.

* Music has been composed specially for these words.

Seedlings.

Homiletic Glances at Psalm cxix.

By Rev. DAVID THOMAS, D.D.

The Bible as containing the Wonderful.

"WONDROUS THINGS OUT OF THY LAW."—*Psalm cxix. 18.*

THE Bible contains "*Wondrous things.*" Wonderful in their *nature*, wonderful in their *number*, and wonderful in their *influence*. As containing the wonderful—

I.—IT AGREES WITH THE CONSTITUTION OF THE HUMAN MIND.

First: Man has a *craving* for the wonderful. He will traverse continents in search of the wonderful. To see the wonderful he resorts to theatres, race-courses, scenes of legerdemain and mountebankery. No books are more attractive to him than those containing the wonderful in adventure, and in descriptions of the extraordinary in the appearance of nature and the feats of men. He craves for the marvellous. The Bible meets this *instinct*. It contains "*wondrous things.*"

Secondly: Man has a *need* for the wonderful. The wonderful is necessary to excite his faculties,

to stimulate his enquiries, to challenge his powers. Reduce the universe to plain and intelligent propositions, and it will lose its charms for the imagination, and its power to inspire investigation. The universal mind will go to sleep, and rot in dormancy. "The Bible containing '*wondrous things*' provides for this deep need of the soul."—*Darling.*

II.—IT ACCORDS WITH THE CHARACTER OF NATURE. All nature is crowded with the wonderful. We need not take the microscope to search the myriad worlds invisible to the naked eye, or the telescope innumerable worlds and system rolling through infinite space to discover the wonderful. The wonderful comes under our eye, sounds in our ear, and beats in our pulse every moment. Nature contains wonderful things—things that man cannot find out, cannot interpret, in which his thoughts are lost. If the Bible did not contain the wonderful it would not be in harmony with nature, not in

harmony with the works of God, either in this planet or in any parts of immensity.

III.—IT REPROVES THE DOGMATISM OF RELIGIONISTS. There are men who profess to understand the Bible and all it contains. They have sounded its depths, they have weighed all its items in their balance, they have gathered the whole into their little creeds; and woe to the man who questions their views. These pan-gnostics are a thousand times worse than the agnostics. They are arrogant, presumptuous, intolerant, and indocile. The Bible as containing the "*wondrous things*" reproves vain man, and virtually says, "you are of yesterday, and know nothing."

Lying.

"REMOVE FROM ME THE WAY OF LYING."—*Psalm cxix. 29.*

THIS short expression indicates the faculty, the propensity, and the habit of lying.—

I.—THE FACULTY of lying. Man has a faculty for misrepresenting facts and for deceiving men. This faculty seems to be shared to some extent by some of the lower sentient existences. The beasts and birds of prey seize their victims by deceit. Man has this faculty in a high degree. By this faculty he can create facts

that have no existence, and invest those that exist with attributes that are purely fictitious. What is poetry but the production of the lying faculty? What are novels and romances but the creations of this faculty? Novelists are professional liars; they live by lying. The mere possession or exercise of this faculty is not necessarily wrong; all depends upon the motives that inspire it, and the uses to which it is directed. Fiction has been used for good purposes, and has often achieved beneficent results; "Uncle Tom's Cabin" for example. "After all," says *Byron*, "what is a lie? it is but the truth in masquerade." Observe—

II.—THE PROPENSITY of lying. The prayer of the text implies a conscious tendency. The propensity to lie is sinful, when it is inspired by corrupt feelings; most venal lies spring from the following wrong states of heart.

First: *Fear* is a prolific source of falsehood. Children tell lies to protect themselves from their parents, wives for fear of their husbands, servants through fear of their masters, &c. Fear fabricates falsehoods.

Secondly: *Vanity*. Vain people tell lies in order to exaggerate their importance. They paint and dress themselves in fiction, they walk in a "vain show."

Thirdly : *Greed*. Avarice is one of the most prolific parents of lies, hence the commercial atmosphere swarms with fallacies.

Fourthly : *Ambition*. Men climb to important offices in Church and State often by misrepresentations of themselves. The conduct of numbers in the House of Commons proclaims the falsehood of their voluble promises on the hustings. Observe

III.—The HABIT of lying.
"Remove from me the way of lying."

First : It is a popular "*way*." Men on all hands are cheating each other. "Lord, lord, how the world is given to lying."—*Shakespeare*. How rare are true men in this world of charlatans and shams.

Secondly : It is a *dangerous "way."* It is inimical to moral health, beset with perils, and leading to moral ruin.

The Bane and the Antidote.

"INCLINE MY HEART UNTO THY TESTIMONIES, AND NOT TO COVETOUSNESS."—*Psalms* cxix. 36.

I.—THE EVIL OF MAN AND ITS ANTIDOTE.

First : The *evil* of man is *covetousness*. This is the root of the moral Upas. *Sir Thomas Browne* says :—"Trust not to the

omnipotency of gold, and say not unto it, thou art my confidence ; kiss not thy hand to that terrestrial sun nor bore thy ear unto its servitude. A slave unto mammon makes no servant unto God. Covetousness cracks the sinews of faith, numbs the apprehensions of any thing above sense, and, only affected with the certainty of things present, makes a per-adventure of things to come ; lives but unto one world, nor hopes nor fears another ; makes then our death sweet unto others, bitter unto themselves ; brings formal sadness, scandal, mourning, and no wet eyes at the grave."

Secondly : The *antidote* of this evil is *Divine truth*. "*Incline my heart unto Thy testimonies.*" The Word of God not only condemns covetousness, but inspires the soul with that love to God and man that expels it. He that loveth the world, the love of the Father is not in him. He who would get his soul freed from all that is sordid, selfish, and avaricious, must go to the "*testimonies*." There he will find the fire that will burn it up.

II.—THE HEART OF MAN AND ITS TENDENCY. "*Incline my heart.*"

First : The heart of man is his moral self. According to it so he is, right or wrong, saved or damned : "Out of it are the issues of life."

Secondly : According to its tendency will be his destiny. (1) It has a tendency to covetousness and this leads to ruin. (2) It must have a tendency to Divine truth,—this requires Divine help. "*Incline my heart unto Thy testimonies.*" God alone can give a right bias to the fallen soul.

Liberty.

"I WILL WALK AT LIBERTY,
FOR I SEEK THY PRECEPTS."—
Psalm cxix. 45.

THE subject of these words is liberty, and liberty is that which gives value and blessedness to life. *Cowper* truly says—

"'Tis liberty alone that gives the
flower
Of fleeting life its lustre and perfume,
And we are weeds without it."

Two thoughts are suggested here about liberty—

I.—LIBERTY IS IN PROGRESSIVE ACTION. "*I will walk.*" Liberty does not consist in mere freedom from constraint. Man may have no chain to fetter him, no granite walls or iron doors to shut him in, may have permission to walk the green meadows spread out before him, and yet have no liberty, he may lack both the disposition and the faculty for action. Liberty not only implies life but activity,

not only activity, but progress,—Walking self-action and onwardness. Very few men can truthfully say "*I will walk,*" they are carried, they are driven on the way of life, they act not from themselves but from others. They are mere spokes in the wheel of the social machine, mere limbs in the body corporate.

"Whether thrallèd or exiled,
Whether poor or rich thou be,
Whether praised or reviled
Not a rush it is to thee.
This nor that thy rest doth win thee,
But the mind that is within thee."

G. Wither.

II.—LIBERTY IS IN THE PURSUIT OF RIGHT. "*I will walk at liberty, for I seek thy precepts.*" Freedom and right are as vitally united as the root and the branch, there is no moral liberty apart from right. The greatest tyrants of the soul are inordinate passions, old prejudices, corrupt habits, worldly greed, sense of guilt, the wretched sinner has a shackled soul, where there are these is no freedom, and where right is not there are dominant despots, "that bawl for freedom in their senseless mood, and still revolt when truth would set them free: license they mean when they cry liberty." To be free is to be right, and to be right is to pursue "*Thy precepts.*"

A Blessed Field for Memory.

"I REMEMBERED THY JUDGMENTS OF OLD, O LORD; AND HAVE COMFORTED MYSELF."—*Ps. cxix. 52.*

"*Thy judgments,*" by which is meant Thy Word, and The Divine Word may be looked upon here in two aspects—

I.—As a field for MEMORY. "*I remembered Thy judgments.*" Memory is a mental power; it has a twofold function. It has a *retaining* function. It retains all the past in life that has made impressions on the heart. "Memory," says *Fuller*, "is the treasure-house of the mind, wherein the monuments thereof are kept and preserved." And it has a *recalling* function. It recalls sometimes *involuntarily*. There are certain conditions in which a resurrection of the past takes place within us. The graves are opened and the dead come forth. Over this we have no control. Sometimes it recalls *voluntarily*. Man has the power of recalling the past, and this he often does. The text points to this recalling power. "*I remembered Thy judgments of old.*" The Psalmist who had made himself acquainted with the judgments now recalls them.

First: The Divine Word is a *refreshing* field of memory. Far

more refreshing than the events of life, the creations of poetry, or the facts of history. What flowers bloom, what fruit clusters, what salubrious airs breathe in this field.

Secondly: The Divine Word is a *large* field for memory. It goes back through eternity; it begins with the creation, it embraces the human race, it runs on through centuries into the interminable future.

Thirdly: The Divine Word is an *imperishable* field of memory. The seeds in this field are the "incorruptible seeds." "The Word of the Lord shall stand for ever." Look at the Divine Word

II.—As a SOURCE OF COMFORT. "*And have comforted myself.*" Nowhere can the sorrowing spirit get such comfort as in the Divine Word; it is in truth the "rest that remaineth for the people of God;" a rest into which faith conducts us. It yields comfort in two ways—

First: By the *presentation of examples*. What a host of good men it reveals as sufferers,—Noah, Abraham, Moses, Job, Daniel, Paul, &c.; and more,—Christ, the Model of all virtue, enduring affliction, overwhelming and undeserved. These examples have comfort. It yields comforts.

Secondly: By the *revelation of principles*. It teaches that the

afflictions of good men are not penal but disciplinary, not sent in anger, but in fatherly love. "Our light afflictions are but for a moment."

The Most Horrible.

"HORROR HATH TAKEN HOLD UPON ME BECAUSE OF THE WICKED THAT FORSAKE THY LAW."—*Psalms* cxix. 53.

Of all the horrible things in the universe wickedness is the most horrible. It is the spirit of all horror. There would be no fear in universal mind had it no existence. It is the most revolting thing to all the sensibilities and faculties of mind.

I.—It is most revolting to our sense of the BEAUTIFUL. The æsthetical element exists in a greater or less degree in all moral minds. And the blessed Creator has provided for it by flooding the universe with beauty. The hideous

and the ugly shock it with inexpressible pain, but what is so incongruous, so horrible as to see puny creatures rising in rebellion against the mighty Creator.

II.—It is most revolting to our sense of the REASONABLE. What is more reasonable than for the greatest Being to be revered the most, the kindest Being to be thanked the most, the best Being to be adored the most? Yet wickedness is in antagonism to all this, it is an outrage on all the principles of moral propriety.

III.—It is most revolting to our sense of the BENEVOLENT. In all moral minds there is implanted by the benevolent Creator a desire for the well-being of self and others. But wickedness strikes right against it, it breathes misery to all. Ah me, did men see wickedness as it really is they would feel what the writer here expresses. "*Horror hath taken hold upon me because of the wicked that forsake Thy law.*"

"Let not a man be querulous, even though in pain: let him not injure another in deed or in thought; let him not even utter a word by which his fellow-creature may suffer uneasiness; since that will obstruct his own progress to future beatitude."—*The Ordinances of Menu.*

"Let this plain truth those ingrates strike

Who still, though blessed, new blessings crave;

That we may all have what we like

Simply by liking what we have."—HORATIO SMITH.

Days of the Christian Year.

Luke xviii. 9-14.

(Eleventh Sunday after Trinity.)

PARABLE OF THE PHARISEE AND THE PUBLICAN.

IF we ask why the publican "went down to his house justified rather than the other" (the Pharisee), we have to take into our consideration, before we reach the actual answer, (1) *That in some respects the two men stand on the same ground*: both are free from (elsewhere) prevalent idolatry; both feel the duty and appreciate the privilege of prayer; both worship in the same building and address the one true object of devotion. (2) *That in some respects the Pharisee seems to have the advantage*: he has (a) the respect of the religious public; (b) the more blameless life; (c) the more religious reputation. (3) *That the terms of their respective prayers are not decisive of their reception by God.* (a) A truly humble worshipper might offer the Pharisee's prayer; it is right to thank God for preserving us from immorality, and for being led in the path of piety: (b) a thoroughly formal worshipper might offer the publican's prayer; how often, since then, have these words been taken into irreverent lips! how often been the unacceptable utterance of proud and

pretentious hearts! A very wise teacher of our own times (the late T. T. Lynch) has represented these men going up again to the temple, the Pharisee mending his prayer by using the Publican's words, the Publican giving God thanks for his altered life, but again the former is rejected, and the latter justified.—

"The Lord again his offering took,
Still spurned the Pharisee's,
For sometimes tears and sometimes
thanks,
But only truth can please."

The answer to our question is found in the facts

I.—THAT THE PHARISEE HAD FORMED A RADICALLY FALSE ESTIMATE OF HIS CHARACTER, AND THE PUBLICAN A TRUE ONE. The one thought that he was all that God required him to be, *and in this he was wholly wrong*: he failed to understand that external ordinances and proprieties of behaviour are nothing without the spirit of reverence and of love, that the kernel is nothing without the fruit. The other believed that he was very far from the favour of God, *and in this he was entirely right*: his unrighteousness and immorality made him verily guilty before God, and brought down the Divine displeasure.

II.—THAT THE PHARISEE'S

FALSE ESTIMATE LED HIM TO SELF-SATISFACTION, THE PUBLICAN'S TRUE ESTIMATE TO HUMILITY. Under cover of gratitude the one was complimenting himself and hardening himself into a state of ruinous complacency. In simple terms the other acknowledged, both to his own heart and to his Maker, his great guilt.

III.—THAT GOD REJECTS THE PROUD AND HONOURS THE HUMBLE HEARTED. Of this doctrine both Testaments are full. The first public words of our Lord indicate that it is the key-truth of His Kingdom. (Matt. v. 3.) There are two classes of men to whom this parable should come home ; (*a*) Those who are satisfied with their spiritual state and have no right to be so : for the Pharisee comes up to the Christian sanctuary, and uses very evangelical phraseology ; (*b*) those who are burdened with a sense of guilt and need not remain so. Acknowledgement of our sin (see Psalm xxxii.), the turning of the heart to the Divine Saviour,—this *must* be attended with “the remission of sins,” and every humble and believing spirit may “go down to his house” with the blessed consciousness of reconciliation filling and flooding his heart with purest heavenly joy.

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Mark vii. 37.

(*Twelfth Sunday after Trinity.*)

“HE HATH DONE ALL THINGS WELL : HE MAKETH BOTH THE DEAF TO HEAR AND THE DUMB TO SPEAK.”

THE exclamation which this miracle (vv. 32-35) called forth from the admiring multitude was a spontaneous and therefore a high tribute to the power and goodness of our Lord. The words in which their admiration found utterance suggest the double element in the Divine bestowal and in the human response.

I.—THE TWO-FOLD GIFT OF GOD. God bestows in us the *receptive* and the *communicative* faculties. One would be essentially incomplete without the other. He enables us to *hear* and to *speak*,—to appropriate and appreciate all that is around us, and, in response, to utter our thought and exert our influence. This He does (*a*) in the realm of the *natural* : The new-born babe cannot distinguish sounds and cannot utter words ; but he is provided by his Maker with native capacities and with helpful surroundings, by means of which the finest sounds and the most perfect harmonies may be perceived and be enjoyed, by means of which every conceivable thought and feeling may be exactly and powerfully expressed :

(b) in the realm of *the miraculous*: this is the primary significance of the text; it has a close and interesting analogy in these curative processes by which, in the providence and under the hand of God, the blind are still made to see, the deaf to hear, the lame to walk, the dumb to speak: (c) in the realm of *the spiritual*: here the greatest and kindest of Divine energies are put forth. By the healing truth of the Renewing Spirit the ear of the spiritually deaf is unstopped, and the tongue of the spiritually dumb unloosed; the voice of heavenly truth is heard once more in the inner chambers of the soul, and lips long sealed by sin pour forth the praises of God and breathe the very spirit of holiness and love.

II.—OUR TWO-FOLD DUTY. (1) If we would hear what God is ready to reveal we must *listen attentively when He speaks*. How much He is saying that men do not hear! The secrets of the earth, the facts disclosed by all the sciences, the truths discovered to us by Jesus Christ and contained in His Word,—these are to be heard by those who intelligently and reverently listen; *but only by them*. It is only the “children of wisdom” that recognize and honour their Lord; “only the good discern the good”: he that

hath ears to hear, let him hear.”

(2) If we would speak what God teaches us to say we must *strive to utter what we know*. As the little child learns to speak by speaking as he can, so we shall learn to utter God’s truth by making it known as best we can: at first inarticulately enough, imperfectly enough; by degrees intelligibly and appreciatively; at length forcibly and effectually.

III.—OUR TWO-FOLD PRIVILEGE.

This is to work with the Divine Healer in His loving ministry to our race. So to live and to labour that we shall be (1) enabling men to hear the voice of the Lord addressing them, and (2) to speak His praise by their lips and by their life. In the various means He employs to make the deaf hear and the dumb speak we may be His conscious, co-operating agents, enjoying His present favour, and anticipating His approval and reward in the day of His appearing.

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Romans xvi.

(*The Thirteenth Sunday after Trinity.*)

For many reasons this chapter is a fitting conclusion to such an epistle as that to the Romans. For (1) It indicates to us that doctrine is subservient to personal

piety. (2) That very sacred social ties should exist between a pastor and his people. (3) That right relationship to Christ creates a right mutual relationship between men. An analysis of the chapter leads us to note—

I.—THE COMMENDATIONS AND GREETINGS OF THE APOSTLE. The commendation of Phœbe, who is as a sweet flower in the landscape where the apostle himself is a majestic oak,—and all the commendations and greetings that follow, lead us to look at *true church fellowship*, (1) In its *variety*. There are men and women of varied (a) stations, (b) characters, (c) services. There is the chamberlain and the slave; there is the active and passive temperament, there are the laborious and the hospitable. There are (2) *The common elements* of true Church Fellowship. (a) *Common relationship*—"Our sister." (b) *Common service*—"Succourer of many." (c) *Common principle*.—"As it becometh saints."

II.—THE CAUTIONS OF THE APOSTLE. The saddest fact in this, and in all these early letters, is the tone in which the apostle has to speak of many professed Christians. In his words of caution about one and another we notice (1) *The mournfulness of the fact that professed Christians have to be so spoken of*. (2) *The dis-*

cernment and courage needed rightly to deal with such characters.

III.—THE GREETINGS FROM ONE CHURCH TO ANOTHER. Here Corinth greets Rome. This leads us to notice that Christianity creates relationships (1) That are *cosmopolitan*. The inherent element of a Church is that it is Catholic. (2) That are *cordial*—"Holy kiss." (3) That are *practical*—"Receive."

EDITOR.

Mark i. 20.

(*The Fourteenth Sunday after Trinity.*)

"HE CALLED THEM."

THE call of Christ here recorded was part of *the discipline of the disciples*. It was the discipline of *obedience*. We find as characteristics of that obedience, that it was—

I.—Obedience emphatically and repeatedly CLAIMED. Sometimes it is described simply as a call, sometimes we have the echo of our Lord's very words to them, "Follow Me," "Come." The tone is royal, not to say peremptory, and is again and again borne in upon them as the expression of a more than kingly claim, as the utterance of an unquestioned right on their loyalty and leal service. To men now, not less than then, the declaration is true, "Thy King cometh to thee." To

all hearts the trumpet message peals, "The Master is come and calleth for thee."

II.—Obedience for which THEY WERE SPECIALLY PREPARED. It is clear that the understandings and hearts of those whom Christ thus called had been prepared by some views of what He would have them do when with Him, and where He might lead them. At first it might have seemed that they were to accompany Him from the banks of Jordan to Galilee. But they soon discovered how much more was intended. How they were to share His lot, how they were to imitate His conduct, how they were to share His spirit. "Following" came to mean walking in the blessed steps of His most holy and useful life. For all this they were more or less prepared, (a) By the current expectations of the Messiah. (b) By the teachings of Old Testament Scripture. (c) By the proclamations of John Baptist. (d) By whatever was already known of the life of Jesus. Similarly and even more variously men are now prepared for obedience to the call of Christ.

III.—Obedience that IMPLIED IMPLICIT TRUST. There must have been much trust at first; and as we trace their lives we find it deepening from stage to stage, though sometimes, alas, it failed.

Paul's conception of the implicit trust implied in loyalty to Christ was that it is a military obedience. The Christian man is "a soldier of Jesus Christ,"—which means that he, and his companions, are towards Christ as the rank and file to a general.

"Theirs not to reason why,
Theirs not to make reply,
Theirs but to do and die."

IV.—Obedience in FACE OF GREAT OBSTACLES. (1) They had to leave their fathers, and their fish,—a hint that *Christian obedience must surmount obstacles of relationship and of property.* (2) The infant Church was a poor itinerant company,—a hint that *Christian obedience must be ready to dare what seems strange, and what is changeful and unstable.* (3) Their difficulties were heightened by scorn, persecution, cruelty they and their Leader had to endure,—a hint that the law of *Christian obedience is "no cross, no crown."*

V.—Obedience which FINDS ITS HIGHEST EMBODIMENT IN THE MASTER HIMSELF. God calls Christ "My Righteous Servant." Jesus "took upon Him the form of a servant." "He Himself learned obedience by the things which He suffered."

"Sharing His service every one
Share, too, His Sonship may."

EDITOR.

Breviaries.

Bodily Consecration.

"I BESEECH YOU THEREFORE, BRETHREN," &c.—*Romans* xii. 1.

FOR some time Paul had been promising to pay the church at Rome a visit, but the growing demands upon his time had deprived him of that pleasure. As an evidence of his sympathy and care he wrote them this epistle. In the text notice I.—THE PERSONS ADDRESSED,—“You, Brethren.” They were already church members. Paul was a grand preacher; he was also unequalled as a pastor. He regarded conversion as the initial step in the heavenly journey, which, to amount to anything, must be followed by a “going on to know the Lord.” Spiritually Paul was an evolutionist. He believed that Christian manhood was a growth. The verbs used most frequently by him, when addressing Christians, are *Run, Strive, Fight, Grow*. He saw the germs and potentialities of Christian manhood slumbering in the babe in Christ. This gave him weighty convictions as to the importance of prompt and proper attention to the nursing. This explains his habit of visiting his former fields of labour.

II.—THE DUTY ENJOINED. “Present your bodies.” The body, as well as the soul, is redeemed, and both must go together into God’s service. It is man yielding his members, as servants of iniquity unto iniquity, that gives incarnate and aggressive power to the kingdom of darkness. The dangerous and luring ways of sin are what they are because human beings are in them body, soul, and spirit. So, to be of any service in the cause of God, we must yield, not our sympathy merely, but “our members as instruments of righteousness unto God.” In order to use us for His glory God must have all there is of us.

III.—THE STATE OR CONDITION OF THE OFFERING. “A living sacrifice.” Allusion is here made to the Jewish sacrifices. The point of contrast being that while the Jewish sacrifice, to have any moral value, must be put on the altar dead, the Christian sacrifice must be presented living. In this verse the Ego, or I, is represented as a priest who lays upon the altar, not a bullock, or a goat, but his own body, a living sacrifice. And as it was the business of the Jewish priest, not only to present the sacrifice, but to keep it on the altar and see that it be properly offered up to God; so the Christian is

not only to present his "body a living sacrifice," but he is to guard it against polluting influences, and see that its powers be exerted for the glory of God. Thus presented it is (1) "*Holy*." He is to see that his body is kept from all contact with the degrading, or sensual. (2) "*Acceptable to God*." Holy, and therefore acceptable. Jewish sacrifices were the best of their kind; and man presenting himself to God must consecrate all his powers of body and soul, or God will reject his offering as a mockery and a sham. (3) "*Reasonable*." Nothing more reasonable than that the creature should serve the Creator. It is said that man is made to rule; it is equally true that he is made to obey; and in obedience is he to find his greatest pleasure and profit. Every noble instinct of our nature admits the reasonableness of God's service.

IV.—THE MOTIVE PROMPTING THE SACRIFICE. "The mercies of God." This motive is (1) *Strange*. Other religions motive their devotees by the judgments and terror of their gods. None but Christianity ever thought of love as the motive to obedience. (2) *Winsome*. (3) *Adequate*.

PHILADELPHIA, PA.

THOMAS KELLY.

Christ's Suggested Comparison.

"WHAT DO YE MORE THAN OTHERS?"—*Matt. v. 47.*

VERY seldom does our Divine Lord suggest that men should compare themselves with men. There is a spirit of such mutual comparison against which St. Paul warns men. (2 Cor. x. 12.) But it is clear that in some way it may and should be done. And that Christian men may not contrast themselves with the worst, the ungenial, the sullen, the morose, but with the responsive, the kind, those who have fraternal virtues. The Christian is to be above such in the great matter of caring for all, of forgiving enemies, and indeed in much more. Why? I.—BECAUSE HE HOLDS A LOFTIER CREED THAN OTHERS. If he holds, or rather is held by, the great tenets of "the Apostles' Creed," he has motives and standards far above anything the Publican or Gentile,—the mere man of this world—however amiable and upright, professes to possess. II.—BECAUSE HE IS THE SUBJECT OF A HIGHER CONSCIOUSNESS THAN OTHERS. He declares that he (1) *realises nobler relationships than "others."* He is a member of an immortal race; a son of God. (2) *Is developing a nobler character than "others."* He is a "Christian," resembling Christ,—a godly, *i. e.*, god-

like man. (3) *Is conscious of nobler claims than "others."* He knows he owes to Christ, and to God through Christ, and to the race through Christ, obligations beyond all the mere man of the world ever hints at. III.—BECAUSE HE PROFESSES TO HAVE A HIGHER HELP THAN OTHERS. He has resources (1) *in prayer*; (2) *in meditation on revealed realities*; (3) *in daily vital fellowship with God*, such as ought to make him brave, and calm, and strong, where "others" are craven, and irritable, and weak.

EDITOR.

A Favourable Time to Expect, and the Infallible Signs which Precede a Revival of the Church.

"THOU SHALT ARISE, AND HAVE MERCY UPON ZION: FOR THE TIME TO FAVOUR HER, YEA, THE SET TIME IS COME. FOR THY SERVANTS TAKE PLEASURE IN HER STONES, AND FAVOUR THE DUST THEREOF."—Ps. cii. 13, 14.

ZION is a name which has a threefold meaning. (a) Literally it refers to Jerusalem. (b) Typically it refers to Heaven. (c) Spiritually it refers to the Church of Christ on earth. By unanimous consent Zion is considered a type of the Christian Church, which is a body of Christlike men, and if we take these words in allusion to the Christian Church we propose to call attention to two statements. I.—THAT THERE IS A FAVOURABLE TIME GIVEN TO PROMOTE THE REVIVAL OF THE CHURCH. (1) The *source* to which the Church must look for a revival. "*Thou shalt arise and have mercy upon Zion.*" (Psalm lxxx. 1; lxxxv. 6; Hab. iii. 2. John iii. 5. 1 Cor. iii. 6, 7.) (2) The *nature* of that revival which the Church may expect. "*Thou shalt arise, and have mercy upon Zion, for the time to favour her,*" &c. This expression is pregnant with beautiful thoughts. It embraces (a) DELIVERANCE. Satanical malevolence has exerted its influence to stop the advancement of the Church, but in every age God has looked upon her when she has been surrounded by floods and flames, and effected her deliverance. (Psalm cxxvi. 3.) (b) UNION. There may be unity of effort, with a great variety of name, of method, and of form. There is unity in light, but what variety of colour in every beam. (1 Cor. xii. 4-8.) The unity which a true revival promotes is frequently mentioned in God's Word. (Psalm cxxxiii. 1.; John xiii. 34, 35, xvii. 21.) (c) PROSPERITY. This embraces reclaiming the backslider, arousing the lukewarm, and the conversion of sinners. (3.) The *time* when the revival of the Church may be expected. "The time to favour her, yea, the set time is come,"

(Isa. xiii. 17-19, xiv. 1, 2; Jeremiah xxxii. 36-39.) The time when the Church may be specially blessed is the present. II.—THAT THE REVIVAL OF THE CHURCH IS ALWAYS PRECEDED BY CERTAIN INFALLIBLE SIGNS. “For Thy servants take pleasure in her stones, and favour the dust thereof.” (1) *Solemn humiliation before God.* The nation was ashamed of its infatuated tendency to idolatry, and never since then, to our knowledge, has it bent its knees at an idol’s shrine. (Ezra ix. 6, 7, x. 1; Dan. ix. 7.) Do we see this spirit of humility in the Church before God on account of its apathy and worldliness? (2) *Importunate believing prayer.* The spirit of importunity and faith are essential to successful prayer. (Isa. lxii. 1; Ezek. xxxvi. 37; Luke xi. 5-10.) (3) *Sincere affection for the ordinances of God’s house.* (4) *Activity and self-denying efforts in promoting the work of God.* “The people had a mind to work.” (Neh. iv. 6.)

ST. ANTHONY.

JOHN WILEMAN.

An Old Indictment Still True.

“THEY CAME NOT TO THE HELP OF THE LORD.”—*Judges v. 23.*

DEAN STANLEY suggests that this arousal of the people by Deborah finds its parallels in Velleda’s incitement of the Germans, and Boadicea’s incitement of the British, against Roman invaders, and Joan of Arc’s of the French against the English aggressors. Without touching now the deeper problems that gather round about war, we may gladly hear how Deborah’s voice, amid the cowardly, and the self-indulgent, and the half-hearted, gave utterance to noble thoughts about Freedom, Independence, National Unity; and we may find in the war to which she summoned her countrymen an analogue of the work for God and man, to which true voices summon every Christian. In doing this we notice—I. OUR CHRISTIAN ACTIVITIES ARE VERY ANALOGOUS TO WAR. (1) Both are *urgent*. War is utterly indefensible unless it is absolutely urgent. Christian work is urgent. About all sin, squalor, vice, meanness, the clarion cry falls upon the ranks of Christian workers, like the echo from a historic battle-field,—“If you do not conquer them they will conquer you.” (2) Both encounter fierce *oppositions*. (3) Both involve *sacrifice*. II.—THE NEGLECT OF SUCH ACTIVITIES INVOLVES US IN A CURSE. What curse? (1) *The reproachful wail of the world’s sins and sorrows.* It is

terrible for a man—who might have helped—to hear the cry, “No man cared for my soul.” (2) *Conscious separation from God.* Fellowship with God means sympathy in deepest purpose, co-operation in chief work; where these are not, there must be alienation from God. (4) *Loss of the rewards of true service.* No satisfaction sweeter than that of having blessed men. To lose that is to be cursed. (5) *Rebuke of Christ.* “Inasmuch as ye did it not to these ye did it NOT TO ME.” There are hells in that sentence darker and more terrific than could ever be in the curse on Meroz the Lord uttered by the angel. EDITOR.

Nicodemus: a Study.

“THERE WAS A MAN OF THE PHARISEES, NAMED NICODEMUS, A RULER OF THE JEWS: THE SAME CAME TO JESUS BY NIGHT, AND SAID UNTO HIM, RABBI, WE KNOW THAT THOU ART A TEACHER COME FROM GOD: FOR NO MAN CAN DO THESE MIRACLES THAT THOU DOEST, EXCEPT GOD BE WITH HIM.”—*John* iii. 1, 2.

I.—A MAN MARKED BY SIGNAL HUMILITY. (a) Himself, a ruler of the Jews. Rich. “Master.” (b) Christ an unauthorized and lowly person. (c) He reverses positions. The teacher comes to learn. II.—A DILIGENT STUDENT OF GOD’S LAW. (a) Christ proceeds on the knowledge of that—“Moses,” &c. (b) A teacher from the love of imparting knowledge. III.—A CAREFUL OBSERVER AND CANDID ADMIRER OF JESUS. (a) His attention had been on Christ and His work. (b) He saw in Christ’s work an invisible hand. (c) He freely declared the result of his observation. (d) He confessed Christ’s connection with God. IV.—A MAN SINCERELY DESIROUS OF BEING RIGHT HIMSELF. (a) He knew that God had taught by man. (b) He felt his own position *as a teacher*. (c) He knew the importance of truth. (d) He honestly served God. V.—A MAN AT GREAT TROUBLE TO KNOW THE TRUTH. (a) Not wait for some one to speak to him. (b) Did not send his servant to fetch Christ. (c) He came personally and opened the subject. (d) He came by night—his own inconvenience. VI.—A MAN FOR EVER ASSOCIATED WITH THE RESULTS OF HIS CONDUCT. (a) His own salvation. (*John* vii. 51, 52, xix. 39.) (b) This chapter for all men. (c) The opening up of Christ’s kingdom. Learn (1) *Religion is either everything or nothing.* (2) *Labour precedes rest.* T. C. E.

Pulpit Handmaids.

THE PREACHING BEST ADAPTED TO THE WANTS OF THIS AGE.

(*A Paper read before a Ministerial Association.*)

IN dealing with this subject I propose, in the first place, to enumerate what, to my mind, is not the preaching best adapted to the wants of this age, and, in the second place, to mention what I believe is the preaching that is most helpful to men and women to-day. You will readily understand that I approach this question of preaching in the spirit of inquiry rather than with any great confidence in my ability to give it a direct and adequate answer. After ten, twenty, or thirty years' ministerial work, we do not all feel quite as sure of some things as we did when we entered College, whilst, on others, we feel much more strongly, our crude opinions having been changed for convictions, and our convictions having ripened into a vigorous faith. The theological tenets to which, in the earlier years of our ministerial life, we gave adhesion, would now, were our task to come over again, have to undergo considerable limitation and modification. Indeed, it would appear that clear and definite views of a few vital religious truths have taken the place of a somewhat vague knowledge of religious doctrine. Not for a moment do I suggest that, in the main principles of our teaching, we have changed, but that our ideas have been clarified, and this very much by our having grown out of the hard and fast lines of abstract doctrines, and merged into that of a personal trust on God in Christ, into an appropriation of God's personal word and promise of redeeming love.

A word or two as to the formulating principles which should guide the preacher may not be out of place. It will be readily granted that it is of paramount importance that there should be (1) right men in the pulpit; else, howsoever good the Gospel may be which is preached, and no matter how eloquently discoursed, it will fail of lasting good. It will also, I premise, be conceded that (2) the heart and life of the preacher should be saturated with the spirit and not the letter of the Gospel; "for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." (2 Cor. iii. 6.) It will, I think, also be granted that (3) there should be as much as possible the exclusion of *dogma* and *isms* in the preaching of to-day. Insistence, too, (4) on the exhibition of truth which will have some influence in moulding character, and helping men to bear the burdens and perform the duties of life. And again (5) the reality of the preacher's

words should be manifest by the broad catholic spirit of his life. It not infrequently happens that ministers are narrow in their views of Divine truth, and that they repel by the mere meagreness of their own lives. It should be remembered also (6) that preaching is very much what the people demand, rather than what a true view of soul requirements necessitate. This being the case, it is of course very much easier for a preacher to let the people's voice rule his message than to sound his own key-note of Gospel truth, "whether men will hear, or whether they will forbear." (Ezekiel ii. 5.) There is, however, (7) in my own mind, little doubt some lacking in all that the late so-called revivals of religion have sprung into existence from our churches. What this need has been, and still is, should be matter of serious thought, inasmuch as until that first be rectified there will be a stumbling-block in the way of true growth in church life and work. There will be, I trust, (8) thorough accord in the statement that the only effective preaching issues from the lips where the soul is in sympathy with the Divine on the one side, and the Human on the other.

But to the negative part of my subject. I.—One of the sorts of preaching that is not helpful for this age is what may be termed (1) *Doctrinal preaching* of the technical kind. Although there is far less of this than there was, it still survives in quarters where we should expect better things. Theological teaching, of course, there must be, against this I am not speaking, but the doctrinal sermon of the formal technical sort, such as we all listened to in our youth, and some of us, alas, in later years, is absolutely valueless. Of this sort of preaching one has pertinently said: "The dialect is dead, the circle and order of ideas with which it deals, its forms of thought belong wholly to the past. There is no vitality in such preaching; it has no authority, no influence, no meaning for us to-day. It does not touch our life, experience, or thought at a single point. Not one in a hundred, under forty years of age, who listens to it, is the least interested in it, or moved by it. The truth there was in this doctrinal preaching needs to be re-thought and expressed in less technical speech. The preacher who aims at practice should keep as clear as he can, in the pulpit, from all dialects, both of thought and speech." At the time of the Reformation Luther's opponents thought of the Bible as a book revealing abstract doctrines, whereas to Luther it was the record of God's words and deeds of love to the Saints of old, and of the answer of their inmost heart to God. "Saving faith," said Luther, "is not an intellectual assent to a system of doctrine inferior to reason; but

a personal trust in God, in Christ, appropriation of God's personal word and promise of redeeming love." "The supreme value of the Bible does not lie in the fact that it is the ultimate source of theology, but in the fact that it contains the whole message of that love to me, not doctrine, but promise; not the display of God's metaphysical Essence, but of His redeeming purpose; in a word, of Himself, as my God."

Another sort of preaching which seems to be of distinctly modern growth, and which, although apparently far removed from doctrinal preaching of the kind just mentioned, is equally valueless, this may, perhaps, best be described as (2) *Interesting* preaching; we all know it, and most of us have tried our hands at it. It may be that we fall into it in recoiling from the doctrinal sermon, and, perhaps also, slender theological equipments and resources will account for a great deal of it. It is the sort of preaching that may be done on a small stock of scholarship and a small stock of doctrine. "It is the preaching," one suggests, "in which a man can make what amount of these commodities he may have, if not go furthest in the sense of being useful, yet show most brilliantly to the uninitiated. Expositions of curious or out-of-the-way texts, information—carefully collected—on Assyria or Egypt, descriptions of scenery, of dress and manners, discussions of bits of experience, bits of truth, bits of speculation—these are the staple of such preaching. Now the geographical position of the Garden of Eden, the Witch of Endor, the Visit of the Queen of Sheba to Solomon, Jonah's Gourd, and similar subjects are really not matters of any serious concern to us Englishmen in the nineteenth Century. When one thinks of a man with thirty or forty minutes only to stir men's hearts, to quicken their languid moral life, to break the spell of custom and the deadening influence of the secular and material side of things, spending his thirty or forty minutes on such subjects; when one thinks of it, I say, Nero's fiddling while Rome was burning begins to seem a serious occupation. These, of course, are extreme cases; the preaching in view does deal with subjects somewhat more interesting and nearer to us than these, but hardly of more practical value. No one is the wiser for life for it, no one is the stronger or better for it. Interesting, ingenious, thoughtful it may be, engaging the attention pleasantly for half an hour; but it deals only with the fringe of things; it does not touch the business of life. A subject is not of importance because it is in the Bible, because we can find a text for it, or see our way to a neat, ingenious, or striking sermon on it. These subjects and sermons do not matter to any living soul except the preacher, and they do not matter in the least to him when the sermon is finished.

The hungry sheep look up and are not fed under such preaching. Simple folk do not know exactly what it is that is lacking, but they feel that something is wanting ; and the wiser ones ask, what has this to do with religion ? What does it all end in ? What has it to do with us ? It may be true or it may not be true, but, true or not, it does not touch or concern any of us. It is in the air, it has no relation to life, to experience. And in a while this interesting preaching ceases to interest. There is not substance enough, truth enough, in it to interest permanently. Preaching should be interesting ; but the preacher should aim at truth and practice first, and not to be interesting."

Then, again, there is a sort of preaching very prevalent, which may, perhaps, be denominated (3) *Inconsequential* preaching. By this term I mean such as presents one side of truth,—such, for instance, as the atonement—which continually speaking about the "blood," enunciates the doctrine of the atonement, but proposes to do nothing with it besides believing it. It would appear to me to be, in the minds of such, like a statue in a workshop,—a mere dead sentiment which does nothing. Such do not try to make it exert its practical energy to govern and console them. To my view, an inconsequential assent to the doctrines of the Gospel is equivalent to utter disbelief. Unless we *use up* all our religious convictions, and embody our faith in our practice, letting truths work in the soul by believing them, reflecting on them, and applying them to the various spiritual disorders and evils to which we feel ourselves subject, we are simply content with an inconsequential assent to the doctrines of the Gospel, and are ignorant of the great secret of being a Christian.

(4) *Sensational* preaching is largely in vogue to-day. It aims at producing effect upon the emotional part of man's nature. We get a surfeiting of this kind of preaching. It is to be had in pretty nearly every town of any size in England. Such preaching has been summed up and pronounced to be "a series of electrical shocks—one burst from beginning to end ; the clouds returning after the rain, and no cotton so thick, and no conscience so hard as to exclude or resist the perpetual tumult. This is the clap-trap idea of preaching."

(5) *Intellectual* preaching is not without its adherents ; and as sensational preaching appeals to the emotional nature, this has solely to do with the intellect, the doctrines of the Gospel being couched in and given forth through intellectual propositions. Indeed, the methods which are adopted to bring home truth to the hearts and minds of men are various and multiform. As has been said,—“One man thinks that to preach,

means accurately to divide a given topic, logically to illustrate it, and to observe a perfect but cold propriety through the various steps and stages of the discourse. This is the *mechanical* plan of preaching. Another imagines preaching to be the exposition of a particular passage of Scripture, bringing out from it all that is in it, and nothing more. This is the *textual* idea of preaching. Another cares not a straw for a sermon if it do not contain a train of rigid argumentation, diversified by occasional bursts of party rage and stormy squirts of the *odium theologicum*. This is the *polemical* idea of preaching. Another likes no preaching but what contains a string of appeals, and queries, and adjurations, unconnected with principles, unsupported by reasonings, and loose as a rope of sand. This is called, though falsely, *practical* preaching. . . . Another wants flowers; whether natural or fresh from the soil, or artificial and faded, it does not matter; if he do but get flowers he is quite satisfied, whether they keep him languishingly awake, or lull him into dreamy repose. This is the *florid* and *Corinthian* idea of preaching. Another is content with exclamations! He is not pleased unless every other sentence begin with Oh! The interjection Ah! has to him a peculiarly pathetic sound; it seems to melt into his midriff like snow, and that preacher would be his *magnus* Apollo, who would say, 'Oh, we remark in the next place.' This is the *interjectional* idea of preaching. Another desiderates chiefly delivery. No minister is a favourite unless his voice be musical, and his attitude smack of the boards; unless he indulge in a profusion of studied declamation, pointing to the four winds when he names them, and laying his hand gently on the heart when he wishes to indicate that interesting organ. This is the *material* or *anthropomorphic* idea of preaching. Another judges of a sermon by its length, and likes it, either because it is an hour, or because it is only the half of the time. This is the *arithmetical* idea of preaching."

Then, again, there is what may be termed (6) *Speculative* preaching, by which I mean that which essays to deal with vexed problems of Divine Truth which are raised and discussed in our ablest magazines. The pulpit thus becomes a rostrum for ventilating the latest theory that has been propounded by scientific men; and instead of the Learners of such a discourse leaving the house of God refreshed and comforted, they retire from it dazed and bewildered at the many-sided aspects of religious truth.

Briefly to classify the sorts of preaching that are in vogue but are not helpful: The technical (of whatever school), the rhetorical (of whatever fashion), the sensational (in all its kinds), the sentimental (weak or moderate), the dogmatic (that thinks more of its propositions and

inferences from them than anything else), the exegetical (in any sort of excess, that makes more of its learning and even of the "letter" of Scripture than of the "body and soul" of human life), the entertaining (that thinks too much of passing a pleasant half-hour and leaving an impression favourable to the speaker), the thoughtful (that is over-careful about its form, and does not enough forget itself in its message), the conventional (that says what is right in the eyes of the world and the world's wife), the sectarian, ecclesiastical or professional, (these all seeking petty, or personal, or artificial objects), the agitational (that is everlastingly bustling, in the pulpit and out of it, as if to convince somebody that it is really and unmistakably doing something), the salvational (that is for ever ranting and hissing as if the whole business of life were to *escape* from something or other), the apologetic (which is for ever "defending" Christianity—that is its own notions about Christianity—from imaginary foes, and yet hardly ever from *real* ones, and seldom wisely or justly from any), these are sorts of preaching to be avoided, inasmuch as they are not helpful to men and women to-day.

II.—But sufficient has already been said on the negative side of this subject, and it is quite time that I called your attention to the positive side of it.

In passing from what is not, to notice what is the preaching best adapted to the age in which we live, I would make this qualification, viz., that some of the sorts of preaching to which I have alluded are to a certain extent helpful, but this only in a secondary way. *E. g.*, these sorts of preaching are mere embellishments of the preacher's message (many of them good enough in their way if not overdone); and ought not to be made his Gospel. This, however, they too frequently are. What then is the sort of preaching that is needed to-day?

1. That which deals with things that touch us *vitally*; which Epictetus termed the "best and master things;" such as are of supreme and everlasting importance to men. The deep and constant needs of the heart, its hunger and thirst after righteousness, its wounds and sickness, our sin and failure and aspiration, our hope and joy and sorrow—it must speak directly to these. This preaching, as has already been pointed out, must answer the ever-pressing questions, "What shall we do? What shall we do to be saved? How shall we live? Which is the way of life? Duty, life, perfection, discipline, salvation, all which these great words include, should engage the first attention of the preacher "He should keep to the great highways of human thought and experience, he should address himself to the sentiments, affections, needs which abide

deep in the general heart of man. He may be critical, speculative, philosophical, expository, controversial, doctrinal ; but if he is not human, if he does not occupy himself with these best and grand things, he misses his mark. He wanders from the point, whatever point he may strike." I am reminded that, "Forty years ago, in reviewing the forces and tendencies of the day in 'Past and Present,' Carlyle expressed the opinion that the 'speaking one,' as he called the preacher, 'had wandered terribly from the point.' He was not seriously intent, in a rational and human way, on that which is truly the preacher's business—the salvation of men. Carlyle's words express the feeling and conviction of many to-day who are neither sceptics nor indifferent to religion, and whose opinion it is quite worth while for the preacher to weigh. It is the conviction of some who listen to him every Sunday, and of more who rarely come within the sound of his voice. They think that three-fourths, or more, of what the preacher says has no practical value whatever. His speech, they say, has little or no relation to things as they are, to life as it is, to the world in which we live. His world, or at least the world with which he deals in his sermons, is a conventional and artificial world. He does not expect that we should take him at his word, and try to adjust our lives in accordance with his teaching." The first thing I would insist on then is that the preaching of to-day should deal with things that touch men *vitaly*, and not, as I have said before, with the fringe of things.

2. *That which embodies clear and definite moral teaching.* Exhortations to duty are not enough for men ; they need to be taught in what their duty consists. Even Christian men and women need instruction on this point, for duty is not the simple matter which it is often assumed to be. For instance, in some cases, the most difficult part of right living is in finding out what is right and wise. To do their duty is a far easier thing for some than to find out what that duty is. Thus, it has been urged that "It is part of the work of the pulpit to help men here, to give them guidance. It should speak on questions of morality with the same sort of authority as that with which the best newspapers speak on politics—the authority which belongs to adequate knowledge and reasoned conclusions. The rules and principles of practice, and the grounds of them, should be explained. Condemnation of obvious sins, vices, and faults ; insistence on obvious duties and virtues are not enough. What is needed is specific and definite teaching." Here is an illustration in point, culled from an able paper on "Practical Preaching : What is it ?" to which I am indebted for some of the thoughts contained in this paper :—"The tradesman knows as well as the preacher that he ought to be

honest, and if he is a Christian man he wants to be honest. His problem is a more specific one. Is he justified, when it is the custom of the trade, in selling seventy yards of silk thread for a hundred, or as wool that which contains cotton? What per-centage of profit is he justified in making? As much as he can? His difficulty is in deciding on questions of this kind. General exhortations on the duty of honesty in trade do not help him, and severe denunciations of trade dishonesty do not help him; and good men will listen to the latter unmoved, unless the preacher shows that he is fairly acquainted with all the important factors of the problem, and can give him guidance in coming to a reasonable and practical conclusion—can make his duty plainer to him. He knows that he ought to deal honestly, but what is honest dealing for a man in his position and calling is a question which is not quite so easy to solve, perhaps, as on the first blush of it it may seem."

Again, amusements, the place and value of social virtues, the relations and duties of the different classes of society to each other, the right use and obligations of wealth,—on all these and similar subjects instruction as well as exhortation is needed.

3. *That which has a body of doctrine behind it.* It has been truly said that, "The man who has no hold of a body of political first principles is not a statesman, though he may be a politician, and his legislation will be of the experimental hand-to-mouth sort. In like manner the preacher who has no hold on the philosophical and doctrinal side of religion and morality will not speak with force in practice. He will not know exactly where he is, and what he is after, and whither he would lead men, and by what road. His speech will lack force, sense, solidity, sureness, which large doctrines, clearly held, give." In short, the preaching that is needed to-day is such as is conspicuous for its message, doctrine, Gospel; such as expresses clearly what it means by its Gospel. It is not too much to say that the weakness and ineffectiveness of a great deal of the preaching to-day spring from this source; it has no doctrine behind or in it. Not a doubt that there will be "Gaps to the creed of the wisest and ablest man who deals honestly with his own mind, and who looks at things as they are. But a creed, a doctrine, he must have. He must have a few great doctrines of which he is sure—the more the better—and he must see their bearing upon life and duty."

4. *That which believes what it speaks.* Such preaching has a "message" for men, one that is *real*, not a *veneer*; a belief that has soul in it, and carries the whole soul with it. Is it not often otherwise? As one has

pointed out—"Either from want of life, or from want of thought, the speaker is not honestly clear as to what he says, or has an insufficient grasp of it. He has, in fact, strictly speaking, no 'message' for men. A man does not believe because he wants to do so, or because he thinks he does so, or because he 'sees no reason to the contrary,' and least of all, because he ought officially to do so. No speech about these things is of any true value of which this is not the ground—the sight of a man's own eyes, the passion of his own heart, the grip of his own thought. The preacher cannot *preach* who is set, or who sets himself mainly to expound and uphold a body of traditions. Least of all men can he receive or hold his faith on any grounds save the high and true grounds. If he is to preach, he must be convinced, and his conviction must be entirely honourable and truthful." . . . "To preach truly, and to preach well, a man must have the substance and energy of real convictions, and must stand on the sure ground of real knowledge."

To sum up and bring these remarks to a close: "Humanity, courage—not less in thought than in speech—sincerity, reality, using no words which we do not mean, and saying as little as possible which we have not thought; a strong desire to win men to God and a true life, to make the life of men sweet and reasonable, true and righteous—these will go far, if we can but reach them, toward making our preaching helpful and practical." In short, we want a preaching that will persuade, guide, gladden, spiritualize, that will proclaim and prove the greatness of true religion and of the true humanity, that will make life seem a thing worth all effort and sorrow, and even sin and pain a strange ministry of divine results; a preaching that will help men in every important business of their lives, that will inspire the simple and the poor, not in name and sentiment, but in spirit and truth, to live as the great ones live—to live the life of Christ in God; a preaching that shall preach the Gospel of Christ with the spirit and with the free wisdom of Christ, with true power to make that Gospel *alive* and *real* for the men of this time; a preaching that believes honestly that the God of Life and of the Universe—of Experience and Law—is the "God and Father of Jesus Christ," and so can help to unite faith and knowledge—*spiritual* faith and *real* knowledge—not in any fidgetting, petty, technical, partisan way, but in a free manly, practical way; a preaching that has the power and ardour of Christian ideals and of Christian love, that really lifts men and makes worship and life one—free both—sacred both—a common "temple service."

DARLINGTON.

FREDERICK A. CHARLES.

Suggestions for Science Parables.

All material Nature is but a parable of spiritual realities.

"Two worlds are our's, 'tis only sin
Forbids us to descry,
The mystic Earth and Heaven within,
Clear as the sea or sky."

THE TRANSFORMING POWER OF LIFE.

"A STRANGE transformation; which will look to us more strange, more truly poetical, the more steadily we consider it.

"The coal on the fire; the table at which I write—what are they made of? Gas and sunbeams; with a small percentage of ash, or earthy salts, which need hardly be taken into account.

"Gas and sunbeams. Strange, but true.

"The life of the growing plant—and what that life is who can tell?—laid hold of the gasses in the air and in the soil; of the carbonic acid, the atmospheric air, the water, for that too is gas. It drank them in through its rootlets: it breathed them in through its leaf-pores, that it might distil them into sap, and bud, and leaf, and wood. But it had to take in another element, without which the distillation and the shaping could never have taken place. It had to drink in the sunbeams—that mysterious and complex force which is for ever pouring from the sun, and making itself partly palpable to our senses as heat and light. So the life of the plant seized the sunbeams, and absorbed them, buried them in itself—no longer as light and heat, but as invisible chemical force, locked up for ages in that woody fibre.

"So it is. Lord Lytton told us long ago, in a beautiful song, how

'The Wind and the Beam loved the Rose.'

But Nature's poetry was more beautiful than man's. The wind and the beam loved the rose so well that they made the rose—or rather, the rose took the wind and the beam, and built up out of them, by her own inner life, her exquisite texture, hue, and fragrance."

Canon KINGSLEY.

Correspondence Page.

[*Enquiries or Answers will be inserted here concerning Books, or about Texts suitable for Special Occasions, or as to Sermons on given Verses or Topics. Brief letters on any matter that pertains to the work of the Gospel Preacher or Student will also be welcomed.*]

ANSWERS.

HISTORY OF THE EARLY CHURCH.

In answer to query in our last,—Among the best works on the History of the Early Church may be named—Neander's "HISTORY OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH;" Stanley's "LECTURES ON THE EASTERN CHURCH;" Milman's "HISTORY OF LATIN CHRISTIANITY;" Mosheim's "ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY;" and the Church Histories of Professor Bright and Canon Robertson. Gibbon's "DECLINE AND FALL OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE" of course includes much of the early history of Christianity.

EDITOR.

QUESTIONS.

WAR AND CHRISTIANITY.

Can any of your readers inform me when Christians first concluded that War was compatible with the profession of Christianity? PAX.

THE GREEK AND THE ROMAN CHURCH.

Will any readers of *The Homilist* briefly indicate the points in which the Eastern Church is more Catholic than the Roman?

ECLECTICUS.

THE REVISED VERSION OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

Is there any date fixed for the appearance of this long expected work?

STUDENS.

THE BLUE RIBBON ARMY.

Will some of your readers, who happen to know, furnish any facts on your next correspondence page as to the permanence of the good results of this modern organisation for dealing with Intemperance. R. T.

Reviews.

DOUBTS, DIFFICULTIES, AND DOCTRINES ; Essays in the Resolving of Doubts, the Removal of Difficulties, and the Exposition of Doctrines, for the Troubled in Mind. By J. MORTIMER GRANVILLE, M.D. London : Ward, Lock, & Co., Salisbury Square.

A well-intentioned effort on the part of a capable medical man to deal with "Doubts and Difficulties" concerning Religion from his own standpoint, could scarcely fail to be of real worth. Hence the value of this book. Dr. Mortimer Granville's standpoint is that of "the physiologist, or, as some would say, the medical psychologist." Moreover, he tells his readers that he has "had abundant proof that it is both possible and helpful to minister to minds diseased, by an intellectual attempt to resolve their doubts, remove their difficulties, and expound the doctrines by which they are perplexed." The scope of his work will be easily recognised when we note that he holds that Society may be divided, with regard to Religion, into the three sections of Believers, Doubters, Disbelievers, and that a very large number of those who like to rank themselves, and are vaguely ranked in the second, do in reality belong to the third class. That multitudes of so-called Doubters are really Disbelievers, he argues, because long continuance in actual doubt on the great matters of Religion would drive men to madness. They do not become mad but live easy-going, comfortable lives, which indicate disbelief in, rather than anxious doubt about, the tremendous realities Religion propounds. However he proceeds to deal with those who are actually Doubters, a class large enough, and sad enough to evoke his profoundest sympathy. This leads him to some trenchant utterances concerning alike the half belief of unreal religionists, and the distorted doctrines of conventional Christianity. Having thus noted the scope of this little book, perhaps we cannot better indicate its spirit than by quotation from its concluding paragraphs. "True Religion seeks to draw the heart out of its loneliness and place it in communion with other hearts, so that it may be animated and strengthened by their sympathies. . . . The whole genius and aim of an exclusively personal and selfish religion is morbid ; and because it is out of harmony with the principle of nature it should be recognised as erroneous, and injurious to the mind it professes to help. . . . A religion of gloom and sadness, of awful forebodings and terrible denunciations cannot be true. . . . This false religion, the religion of

misread and wrested Scriptures, is the cause of that selfishness against which I protest ; first, because it is wrong in itself ; and second,—though with scarcely less urgency—because it lies at the root of most of the doubts and difficulties, and vexed or vexing questions about The Deity, and doctrines by which the troubled in mind are distressed.”

THE BIBLE : *Its Revelation, Inspiration, and Evidence.* By the Rev. JOHN ROBSON, D.D. Author of the “Hinduism and Its Relation to Christianity.” London : Hodder and Stoughton, Paternoster Row.

The fact that the Author of this book confesses that he has learned some of the chief lessons of the true method of a Christian Apologist from his controversy in past years with Brahminical and Mahommedan thinkers, gives him at once much advantage in these days, when Comparative Theology is gaining profounder interest in every quarter. Dr. Robson’s work before us supplies an argument very broad in spirit yet equally definite in view, for the position that the Bible holds as the authoritative Scriptures of the Christian. Traversing such ground as “Primeval Revelation,” “The Revelation of the Bible,” “Inspiration of the Bible,” and “Evidences,” our author brings us face to face with all those great problems which no student can ignore, and which, alas, few teachers can interpret. Without disparaging any of the twelve chapters this comprehensive volume contains, we assess as of highest worth, the last of all which is on “Christianity as compared with other Religions.” We close the book with renewed conviction that universal man has a religious instinct, and that Christianity is the Divine provision which meets, strengthens, and satisfies that instinct.

EUDOKIA. By THEOPHILUS, A. M. London : Eliot Stock.

This is a vindication of the New Testament, English and Greek, as effected by a Bible Revision Company. That our readers may understand the nature of the work, and may be induced to peruse it we transcribe the preface entire. “The immediate cause and reason of this publication are as follows:—In May, 1881, three days after the New Testament Revised Version, the work of eleven long years, was given to the Church and the world, the present Primate of England, then Bishop of Truro, spoke these words in the Chapel Royal, as if by authority commending

and legalizing the book. 'This work is eloquent in the ears of all English-spoken men; the Revised Version of the New Testament speaks to them with a new and eloquent voice. A new version, richer with all that 300 years have added, and clearer with all that 300 years have illustrated of knowledge, of criticism, of insight.' With so much proclaimed in its favour beforehand, the Revised Version is found upon careful examination to be wonderfully like the Popish Douay, or Rhenish New Testament in English, rendered from the Roman or Latin Vulgate, *only outdoing* that Version in retaining all its corruptions, in importing into the text many changes of a most doubtful character, and in casting out the most precious Scriptures without cause or reason shown. On May 2nd, 1883, at the anniversary meeting of the British and Foreign Bible Society, which sends forth to the world at large its myriads on myriads of Bibles and Testaments in almost 300 different languages; the same speaker, now Archbishop of Canterbury and Primate of all England, as if endorsing all he had said publicly of the Revised Version two years ago, was pleased to commend the "*mild wisdom*" of the Executive of that great Society, the noblest institution in the world if kept pure, in continuing to send out, in the face of remonstrance, translations from the Roman or Latin Vulgate, that is, Popish Versions of the Holy Scriptures where the people will not receive any other (?) not remembering the Holy Spirit's warning exhortation, 'Let us not do evil that good may come.' After such declarations in public by the Spiritual Head of the Church of England, speaking for the whole Protestant Church throughout the Empire and, in fact, throughout the world, it appeared to the Author, a descendant of Latimer the martyr, altogether impossible for the friends of truth—the truth as it is in Jesus—to hold their peace any longer, but taking their stand, as it is done here, we trust, on the sure foundation which God hath laid in Sion, to speak out firmly, yet respectfully, in vindication of the English New Testament as it ought to be, making their appeal, without fear or favour, direct to the law and to the testimony of God."

CHRIST OUR LIFE, and other Homiletical Expositions. By JOSEPH T. WOODHOUSE. Southport. Printed for the Author.

The Author has favoured us with an early copy of his book, which we are glad thus to be among the first to greet. It is a volume of some thirty sermons, finding its title from the subject of the first discourse,—a custom this very common, though we think often not so fortunate.

However, it has good precedents, so that we are indisposed to press our objection very far. We are rather concerned to record our opinion that the thoroughly interesting way in which Mr. Woodhouse deals with the important topics he selects is an indication of honesty of treatment, freshness of feeling, and general vigour of intellect and heart, such as any preacher might covet for his great work. In one Sermon after another in this book, we have been struck with the fact that painstaking and lucid analysis need not displace vivid picturesqueness or tender pathos.

A HOMILETICAL COMMENTARY ON THE BOOK OF LEVITICUS. No. I.
By the Revs. W. H. JELLIE and F. W. BROWN. London :
Richard Dickenson, 89, Farringdon Street.

Mr. Brown's name has been for so many years familiar to the readers of *The Homilist*, as one of its most concise and suggestive contributors, that he needs no introduction here. His part of the work before us is quite in keeping with his productions on our pages. Both he and his fellow-author have undertaken a task of no ordinary difficulty. Perhaps no book of Scripture is less promising for homiletic treatment than Leviticus. Yet it is a preacher's work to discern amidst the regulations and rituals that were local and temporary the principles that are universal and eternal. To a large extent this is achieved in the first number of the Commentary that has just reached us. As successive parts come into our hands they shall have fuller and careful attention, and we anticipate also renewed commendation to our readers.

THE CARE OF NEGLECTED CHILDREN: a Sermon preached by Rev. J. M. WILSON, M.A. (Head Master of Clifton College). Bristol: T. D. Taylor, Small Street.

Here again we have a production from one who is known by invaluable contributions to our pages, to the Readers of *The Homilist*. It is a clear, broadminded, stirring appeal to a Christian congregation on a pressing practical topic. Though we doubt whether Mr. Wilson quite realises how much personal care and enthusiasm can be brought into the Board-School system, we cannot but rejoice at his general message, and wish it were circulated by thousands.



Leading Homily.

UNIVERSAL RETRIBUTION.

“WITH WHAT MEASURE YE METE IT SHALL BE MEASURED TO YOU AGAIN.”—*Luke vi. 38.*

JESUS was not enacting a new law when these wonderful words fell from His lips—royal, nay Divine, though those lips were. He was quoting a proverb that was a popular proclamation of an ancient and enduring law—so ancient and enduring that it is, indeed, eternal and universal. But besides quoting it He was accentuating it here, as He did elsewhere, with strongest emphasis, that His disciples might be guided by it in the habit and spirit of their lives. It is enough for us now to notice how this inviolable law is true of us (and of all men) in our relations to Nature, Society, and God.

I.—It is true of us with regard to NATURE, “with what measure ye mete it shall be measured to you again.”

By Nature I now intend all mere material creation, the external universe which, as Canon Mozley well says, “labours as a machine or sleeps as a picture” around, above, and beneath us.

It is indisputably clear that in man's relation to that, he gets back according to what he gives.

"We receive but what we give,
 And in our life alone doth Nature live :
 Our's is her wedding garment, our's her shroud :
 And would we aught behold of higher worth
 Than that inanimate cold world allowed
 To the poor loveless, ever anxious crowd !
 Ah : from the soul itself must issue forth
 A light, a glory, a fair luminous cloud
 Enveloping the earth !
 And from the soul itself must there be sent
 A sweet and potent voice, of its own birth,
 Of all sweet sounds the life and element."

For instance, a *painter*, like Turner, gives Nature prolonged and passionate admiration, and so she grants him insight into her strange and fantastic and mystic grandeurs: a *scientist*, like Newton, renders her his steady, fixed attention, and she whispers to him the secret of her law of gravitation: a *poet*, like Wordsworth, looks into Nature's face, listens to Nature's voices with an enthusiasm that is almost worship, and she so surrenders herself to him until she has made him seem to be sovereign in the scene he immortalized, and her high priest almost everywhere.

Unspeakably greater than all, Jesus regards Nature with an eye, an ear, a heart that is supreme alike in understanding and sympathy: and so Nature yields Him the deepest meaning of her flocks and her flowers, of her seed in the soil, her birds on the wing, her fleecy clouds and her fitful breeze: for in His parables what have we but the discovery of the notes of Nature's concealed harmony and the features of her veiled beauty.

But, indeed, I may pass from the great, and very far from the Greatest Life to prove my point. The world is giving to every one of us according to our treatment of it. Treat it as a *Hotel* and it will give you your dinner, and your bed, and, perhaps, your billiard-table, and nothing more; treat it as a *Market* and it will give you commodities and cash, and you shall buy and sell and get gain; treat it as a *Museum* and it will give you objects that interest, and

amuse, and perplex ; treat it as a *Temple* and you will realise, not only that the rocks are its grand foundations, the meadows its mosaic floor, the mountains its majestic pillars, the stars its mystic lamps, but that it is filled with the Sheckinah, your reverent spirit is in the very presence of God, and you feel "the Father seeketh such to worship Him."

II.—This law ("with what measure ye mete it shall be measured to you again) is true of us in our relation to SOCIETY.

This, indeed, was our Lord's application of the principle in His use of these words now. The harsh, untender man will find himself in turn the victim of stern verdicts ; the mean man will find the world can treat also him with niggardliness and baseness. While the generous man, the man of bountiful heart and charitable judgments, will find the world respond to his own lofty tone of soul. "For a good man some would even dare to die." Ishmael's hand is against every man and, therefore, every man's hand is against him. More broadly still, "they that take the sword shall perish by the sword." The man of brute force—whether the cruel conqueror or the common cut-throat, roughly says, "This world's mine oyster and with my sword I'll open it," and, in his turn, he finds himself the sport and prey of its guillotines and gallows, prisons and artilleries.

Let an individual, or a class, or a man cherish selfish aims, pursue selfish schemes, and, *sooner or later* and in *the deepest experiences* (*that* must be emphasised, sooner or later and in the deepest experiences), the man, class, nation will find itself isolated and deserted, if not scorned and cursed. Is it not so with *Institutions*? Take the *Home*. He gets most from the home who brings most of nerve and heart, care and thought into it. Home means to him what it can never mean to the husband who is a prodigal absentee from it, or to the son who is a sulky self-seeker in it. So with the *Church* ; its services, its sacraments, its membership are to men in proportion to the constancy, the faith, the brotherliness they bring to them. So with the *Nation*. What is England to me? what has it ever done for me? asks some poltroon of an Englishman who is a stranger to all the enthusiasm and

labours and public spirit that the true patriot cherishes. The commonwealth is nothing to such a man, just because he brings nothing to the commonwealth. All this is broadly true; and it seems based on the principle our Lord here and elsewhere is promulgating.

But I am not forgetful of the apparent contradictions to this principle with which Society abounds. Here is a man who has toiled devotedly, nay, who has lived completely for family, or neighbourhood, or Church, or country. And he is met with cold ingratitude. His children are basely unthankful, and like Lear he cries,—“Sharper than a serpent’s tooth it is to have a thankless child”; or like Wolsey he sobs out that king and country “have left him in his old age to his enemies.” With what measure he meted it is *not* measured to him again. Or sometimes, what is worse even than ingratitude, the philanthropist finds he has spent time, strength, life itself, ungrudgingly, and there is no response that he can discover, no result that he can weigh. “I said, I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought.” With the measure he meted it is *not* measured to him again. This is a seeming contradiction to the principle we are considering. But it is only seeming, as two considerations will suggest. (1) What does the true parent live for—mere gratitude? and the “good, great man,” what does he seek—honour, wealth, applause? No! and it may be that often he does not receive them. You get back not chiefly what Society *gives* you—willingly and responsively, but what you derive from it in spite of itself, and far above its power of donation; what your works were, what your purpose was, that influences you in return; that in its vibrations on Society, that in its radiations from Society affects you, and affects you in training you, and fashioning you, and ripening you to highest ends. The measure of self-denial, of heroism, of sacrificial manhood you mete out to Society, determines the amount of self-denial, heroism, sacrificial manhood your own character will derive from intercourse and contact and conflict with Society. (2) Moreover, perhaps, it is only a seeming contradiction that generous men often find ingratitude, and philanthropic men often meet with failure. That is only a

time view. We are only judging by a little span out of the eternities; and by the surface, instead of by the profound realities of the spiritual universe. "He that goeth forth weeping, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." When all is known, and they who have laid up treasure in heaven, are received, by those for whom they laid up treasure, into heavenly habitations, many a wronged and wearied and disappointed worker of earth will set to his seal that this was true,—With what measure we meted it has been measured to us again.

Is it not thus with our great Saviour Himself, though in His incarnate life it often appeared otherwise? How did Jesus give Himself, without measure, to mankind; and how is He receiving, surely in hundreds of hearts here, in the millions of redeemed humanity, the trust, the loyalty, the love that His pity, His compassion, His tears, His blood, His cross constrain and command. "He shall see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied."

III.—It is true of us WITH REGARD TO GOD, "with what measure ye mete it shall be measured to you again."

This is the record of the Psalmist's experience with regard to God,—“With the merciful Thou wilt shew Thyself merciful, with the froward Thou wilt shew Thyself froward, with the pure Thou wilt shew Thyself pure.” And in the Lord's Prayer it finds deep and practical verification,—“Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive,”—for the petition implies that we are penetrated with the spirit of mercy ourselves, and so can believe in mercy, can rejoice in mercy from God.

This truth, namely, that God metes to us, as we by the measure of our giving to Him are qualified and prepared to receive, finds a distinct proclamation in the Lord's words—"To him that hath shall be given, and from him that hath not, shall be taken away even that he hath." Indeed the principle is nowhere more clear in its application than in our relationship to God. Let God be to our thoughts and feelings a vague conception, or a dim dream, or even an Infinite Force,—and we only yield Him what we would to conception, dream, Force,—and He will—and this is

something doubtless—give Himself to us as a Thought, a Vision, a Law. But let God be to us a King, a Friend, a Father, and we habitually offer Him what the loyal brings to a King, what the loving brings to a Friend, what the filial brings to a Parent,—and, lo! “I will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.”

Has it not been all through the centuries that the measure in which men have given themselves to Jesus, is the measure in which His truth, His grace, His very Self, have been given to them? Of course back of this is the great and glorious fact that He gave Himself first of all to a race that was in rebellion and enmity to Him. “Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us.” “He came to His own, and His own received Him not; BUT as many as received Him to them gave He the power to become the children of God, even to them that believe on His name.” Yes, the measure in which we mete our faith in Him, our loyalty to Him, our surrender to Him, is the measure in which there is meted to us the sense of forgiveness, the endowment of power, the enjoyment of communion. Those who mete out no faith, find that He cannot do many mighty works there because of unbelief. While “to those who believe all things are possible.” Give yourself to Jesus in full, free, clinging, and cleaving trust and love, and His promise to you stands firm as the everlasting hills, or clear as the undimmed stars: “My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him.” The heart that sings—

“All my trust on Thee is stayed,
All my help from Thee I bring,”

is the heart that can go on to sing—

“Thou, O Christ, art all I want,
More than all in Thee I find,”

for in this, as in all the relationships of the soul, it is true, “With what measure ye mete it shall be measured to you again.”

THE EDITOR.

Germ of Thought.

The Silence of Christ.

“AND HE ANSWERED HIM TO NEVER A WORD.”—*Matt.* xxvii. 14.

“THERE is a time to keep silence and a time to speak,” said the wise man. The difficulty is to know the right time for each. We may be led toward the solution of this difficulty by observing the life of the “Greater than Solomon.” Jesus refrained from public speech till He was thirty years of age, with but one exception, and that hardly to be so termed, namely, the occasion whereon, as a lad of thirteen, He asked questions of, and rendered answers to, the doctors of the law at Jerusalem. It were well if in many cases longer silence preceded public speech. Some fruit trees are not allowed to bear for years, the result being a greater subsequent productiveness. Amongst mankind a like repression of precocity would often result in a corresponding measure of fruitfulness.

At last Christ broke the silence and taught His disciples and preached to the multitudes; but His public ministry was short, and at the period from which our text is taken may be said to have ended. He has preached His last sermon to the crowd in Jerusalem, and delivered His last address to His followers amidst the shadows of the olive trees in Gethsemane’s garden. Henceforth for the most part He is silent.

But His silence is *not absolute*. When His *character* and *person* are in question before Caiaphas, He speaks, though briefly. He was no masked conspirator, and had no esoteric doctrine for the select few, with an exoteric doctrine for the general multitude. “I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing. Why askest thou Me? Ask them which

heard Me what I have said unto them: behold they know what I said." Thus did Jesus reply (John xviii. 19-21) to the High Priest when enquired of concerning His disciples and His doctrine. Further, as Matthew tells us, He confessed that He was the Son of God, and that hereafter He should be seen sitting on the right hand of power and coming in the clouds of heaven.

When His *claim* and *object* were in doubt before Pilate, He broke silence, affirming that He was the King of the Jews; but in a wholly spiritual sense. "My kingdom is not of this world: if My kingdom were of this world then would My servants fight that I should not be delivered to the Jews, but now is My kingdom not from hence." I am not come, He virtually said, to interfere with Cæsar, or his procurator, but to lift men to a nobler plane of life. But before the curiosity of the profane Herod, and the clamorous Babel of false accusations that arose from His enemies, "He answered to never a word."

Yet His silence was *not guilty*. In the parable of the Marriage of the King's Son we read of one who came in, not having on the wedding garment, with which he should and might have been provided. To him the King, coming in to see his guests, exclaims, "Friend, how comest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless." Christ was King of the Jews, yet wore no royal robe. He was clothed, however, in perfect sanctity, so that the centurion said, "Surely this was a righteous man"; the thief on the cross, "This Man hath done nothing amiss"; and Pilate himself affirmed, "I find no fault in Him." Our Saviour's stainless life was more eloquent than any words.

Nor was His silence *apathetic*. This closing quietude of Christ's visible career was foretold by the prophet as he said, "He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth; He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb so He openeth not His mouth." But the sheep goes unmurmuring to its doom in ignorance thereof. Christ knew all that lay before Him, to its minutest detail. Aye, even from those early days, when to questing parents He said, "Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business."

Apathetic? We know how He agonized in Gethsemane! never was more sensitive nature than His!

Neither was His silence *stoical*. He did not, could not say "the cross is inevitable, whether I approach it reluctantly or with alacrity, it cannot be evaded. It will be best, therefore, to meet it with silent if seeming indifference." The cross was not inevitable. He had power to lay down His life and power to take it again. A volition would have brought twelve legions of angels to His succour, or have removed Him far from peril. The great conflict was involved in the decision to which at that critical moment He must arrive. He spoke, ere entering Gethsemane for the last time, of the approach of the prince of this world with whom there was to be a final contest. Should He lay down His life for a godless and brutal race, or on behalf of a cowardly group of followers, one of whom had already added treachery to deceit? We know the conclusion to which He came, and something of our indebtedness to His victory. He was "tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin"; and if we are worth aught, we have known something of the struggle between self-interest and self-sacrifice, and something of the joy that follows the triumph of the latter.

Christ's silence was *compassionate*. To have spoken further to those who were resolved on His condemnation would have been to augment at once their responsibility and guilt. Christ's speech and silence were both determined by love. When with uncompromising words of condemnation He scathed the Pharisees, the prompting impulse was love. The Great Physician would not refrain from stern measures in an almost desperate case, or spare the infliction of pain if thereby He could save life; neither would He tease the hopeless with unavailing lancet and medicine. It is in compassion that He answers to never a word the persistent ravings of malice.

And His silence was *holy*. Peter tells us how, "when He was reviled, He reviled not again; and when He suffered He threatened not." Be the surface of the sea never so placid, the fierce wind will not blow long thereon before it is lashed to responsive wrath; and how quickly in fallen humanity does anger beget anger.

But the storm of hatred that burst on Christ produced no ripple of resentment in the tranquil breast of Him who, being the Water of Life, was calm as pure. If ever He was angry, it was for wrong done to others and not to Himself.

Prescient was Christ's silence. He foresaw not only the cross but the crown, and "for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame," quietly anticipating a sure emergence from the shadow of conflict into the sunshine of victory. The time for speech and action was now for the most part over; that for suffering and silence had come. He was quiescent, knowing that the story of the cross should move and save the world. He was by His endurance *making* the Gospel which His disciples were subsequently to preach to every creature.

So Christ knew just when to be silent and when to speak. And the principle that guided Him in either course was love to others. When He could do men more good by speech than silence, He spake; when more by silence than speech, He "uttered never a word." Let such principle govern us in our communications with those around. We are too apt to be voluble in our own justification, when it would be better to allow quiet and consistent lives to tell their own tale. We are often tempted to proclaim, directly or indirectly, our own sacrifices, toils, or virtues. "Let another man praise thee and not thine own mouth, a stranger and not thine own lips." But what if others never do commend? Better go without their approbation than secure it by demand, or forestall it by self-laudation. Tread simply the path of duty.

"Go labour on, whate'er thy lot;
All earthly loss is heavenly gain.
Men heed thee, love thee, praise thee not;
The Master praises, what are men?"

All silence is impressive. That of nature, as its resistless forces pursue their destined ends; as the heavenly host tread their mazy courses. The poet says—

"For ever singing as they shine";

but the music of the spheres is silent, and the Psalmist is nearer the truth when he says, "There is no speech nor language, their voice is not heard." The silence of the grave-yard is impressive, where the dust of those who once formed part of the tumultuous throng of contending and rejoicing men sleeps in stillness, unbroken only by the wind that sighs betwixt cypress and sepulchre.

Impressive is the stillness of death, as Thomas Hood made clear when he represented Eugene Aram as saying of his victim :—

"There was nothing lying at my feet,
But lifeless flesh and bone!
Nothing but lifeless flesh and bone,
That could not do me ill,
And yet I feared him all the more
For lying there so still."

Christ bade His disciples preach, and continue so to do, but one by one they are silenced, and it may be questioned if the stillness that seals their lives, as they are borne to the grave, is not even more eloquent than the words they formerly uttered.

But most impressive of all is the silence of Christ, maintained unbroken through successive centuries. Yet He pleads by His servants; inaudibly, though not ineffectually by His providences—both severe and gracious; and by His Spirit, which communicates through conscience. Yet "the day is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of Man and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of condemnation." Will it be ours to hear Him say, with a voice tremulous in its pity, "Depart"; or with an utterance whose vibrations are all joyful, "Come, ye blessed of my Father?"

WORCESTER.

SEPTIMUS MARCH, B.A.

"It is one of the most precious mysteries of sorrow that it finds solace in unselfish thought."—GARFIELD.

Christ: The Son of God.

"THE SON OF THE LIVING GOD."—*Matt.* xvi. 16.

"THE *Son* of the living God." In what sense are we to understand this announcement; how are we to interpret the filial relationship herein claimed?

In the Old Testament the words "son," or "sons," has three or four different applications. (a) In Exodus it is applied to Israel, who is denominated "my son," "my firstborn." (b) In Genesis the application is more restricted. It is applied to those in authority, and also to those distinguished for piety and virtue. (c) In Job, angels are spoken of as "sons of God." It is thus applied to superhuman beings.

But looking at the relationship, which in these cases, the term involves, we find that whatever may be the limit of this application, the term is descriptive of either an ethical or theocratic relationship; it embodies a moral or special Jewish idea. The question arises then, in what sense did our Lord use it? and in what sense did the apostle apply it? Was our Lord the Son of God in the sense only that we are all sons of God, God being our Creator, the Father of us all? Or was He a Son of God simply through the perfection of His moral character, in the ordinary sense by which we speak of every good man as a son of God? Is this title descriptive of a natural or moral relationship only? Or did our Lord use it in a distinct and special sense which implied divinity of nature and equality with God?

That He used it with a special and altogether exceptional meaning is shewn by the way the people received it, and treated it. If they had misunderstood it, He had opportunities enough to correct them. But He did not. We are shut up, therefore, to either of two conclusions: either Christ was dishonest and allowed the people to go away with a false conception of His meaning, but this is making the best of men an impostor, and ruining the splendid character that men for ages have admired; or, if honest,

then the people had correctly interpreted His words. The proclamation of His Divinity was the great obstacle to His reception. Men who would have accepted Him as the Messiah could not receive nor tolerate the claim of equality with God. They could not bear it. The Jews then, as now, were conspicuous for their insistence upon the absolute unity of God. Amid all their vicissitudes and changes they clung tenaciously to this. It affected the doctrine concerning their Messiah. In our Lord's time they did not believe that the Messiah would be a Divine Person equal with God. And so our Lord's Messianic claim did not in their minds involve the necessity of His Divinity. He might have been the Messiah without being God. Divinity was not a cardinal article in their Messianic faith. This is easily shown. John the Baptist, at one period of his career, was, by many believed to be the Messiah, yet they did not regard him as Divine. To them he was only human, though the great deliverer. It came out clearly also in the discussions of the Rabbis with the early Christian Fathers. Their notion of the unity of God made the fact of an incarnation impossible to them. It blinded them to the teaching of their own Scriptures. For although nowhere in the Old Testament is the Messiah explicitly called the Son of God, except perhaps in the Chaldee portion of the Book of Daniel, His more than human origin and nature runs through many, if not most, of the prophecies concerning Him. Yet they failed to understand or to believe that their Messiah would be God manifest in the flesh.

In this fact we have a key to much which is incomprehensible in the Gospel history, and in the Jews' reception of our Lord.

I.—It supplies us, among other things, with an answer to the question—"Why was our Lord put to death?" What was the motive of the persecution and the principle on which the Jews founded their indictment that He "ought to die?" How did they justify it to their consciences and reconcile it with their religious principles? The Jewish rulers were not all bad men. As a class they were the most religious people of their day. They had clearly defined principles, distinct and firm religious convictions, the highest morality at that time of any nation. To

say that they crucified Jesus through virulency is not sufficient. What aroused the virulency? What was the cause of the hatred? Why should a despised Galilean—in their estimation only a carpenter's son—command so much of their attention? lead them to such unscrupulous devices to get rid of Him? The murder had to be justified even to themselves. Their conduct wrought in some way into harmony with their convictions. Men with even the poorest religious convictions cannot dye their hands in blood without some reason, some excuse. Murder is not easy to conscience. Qualification is necessary. All the more so when the murdered is of sinless character, of pure and upright conduct, as Jesus was. The crime had to be justified to the people and to their consciences, reconciled also in some sort of way to the law. How did they do so?

They accused Him before Pilate of sedition, of plotting against Rome. But this was a mere device to gain conviction. The real charge the Roman governor, they were afraid, would not notice, so they made up this one. If it had been true Jesus would have had the fervent sympathy, the earnest, though perhaps secret, support of priest and people, not their opposition. The Jews hated the Roman power too much to claim the life of a rebel.

Nor was it because He claimed to be the Messiah. The Pharisees were at one time inclined to take John the Baptist for the Messiah, yet they brought no charge against him. After the miraculous feeding of the five thousand the people were going to make Christ by force a king. After the raising of Lazarus they hailed Him "as He who cometh in the name of the Lord." The claim would rather have been welcome than otherwise.

Jesus was put to death because He claimed to be the Son of God—made Himself equal with God. This came out during the trial, as the true ground of their impeachment. When the charge of sedition failed they said to Pilate,—“We have a law, and by our law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God.” This language would be meaningless if it meant no more than that Jesus Christ was a saintly man of holy life, of blameless character; or that He claimed to have only a Divine mission like many of their own kings and prophets. If they

regarded Him as a false Messiah, or a false prophet or blasphemer, and sought His death, as they had by law a right to do, it was because He claimed to be Divine. If He was misunderstood, He had had an opportunity of explaining Himself; but instead of doing so He only emphasised His previous declaration, and thus endorsed the meaning the rulers and the people placed upon His words.

The title is no moral nor theocratic one, it is real; and in accepting it Jesus Christ our Lord claimed to be God manifest in the flesh, one with the Eternal Father.

II.—It explains also our Lord's answer to Peter's confession—"Flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee." The knowledge of Christ's Divinity came by Divine revelation to the apostle, not by human agency. Popular opinions, the teaching of the scribes, early training did not lead to it; it was revealed to the disciple by the Father. This is the sum of our Lord's answer. It is said sometimes that the respect of the disciples for their Master created the Christ of the Gospels and Epistles. The Saviour of the world thus becomes a dream of the apostolic imagination, His deity only a tribute of their regard. But all the facts of the case are against such a supposition. Their training, their known characters, their predilections, the thought of their age, are all against it. The facts would make it rather the last thing they would have supposed Him to be, and they, without His teaching, the last to believe it. They were not poets, they were plain, practical men, looking at things in a very matter of fact way, not given to theories, but to plain dealing. They were not scholars acquainted with, and having predilections towards, Alexandrian mysticism and Oriental imagery, they were simple men, of very limited education, imbibing the thoughts of their people, and prejudiced towards the opinions of their class. To make Christ, by imagination, Divine, was, from their standpoint, to dishonour Him. It was to make Him guilty of blasphemy, and thus, as a blasphemer, to make Him subject to death according to the law they still obeyed and respected. It was to make His acceptance with their countrymen more difficult,

if not impossible. It was to belie their past, to set themselves against their people, to make themselves also guilty of blasphemy and therefore of death. And what for? A dream, a myth. Nothing more? The disciples were of too practical a character to be thus deluded. They were not the men to give rise to such fancies. They came to a faith in their Lord's Divinity through deep soul-searchings, deep spiritual changes wrought in them by the Spirit of God. It created them; they did not create it. It made them the dauntless souls who dared to face the world for a faith; they did not make it the faith that wins the world. There was nothing about His earthly surroundings to awaken it, to suggest it even; nothing about theirs to anticipate it. So His words at first puzzled them. His references to His Deity brought into their allegiance confusion and misunderstanding, which only strong love could bear and ultimately surmount. He was a mystery to them; His words dark and hard to be understood. Not until the Passion was over, and the Death and the Resurrection came with its new and startling light—not until their minds were enlightened by the pentecostal blessing—not until the mist of Jewish hopes and prejudices was dissolved by the beneficent light of Heaven did they see that He with whom they had consorted on earth, who had won their affection, and roused their admiration, was none other than God himself, robed in the garments of our weak humanity.

They came to this faith in Christ's Divinity, through Divine revelation, not through human instrumentality. Flesh and blood did not reveal it unto them, but the Father in heaven.

III.—It explains what may at first perplex some, namely, the comparatively limited effect of our Lord's miracles. The wonder is not that men believed in Him on account of the miracles, but that so few did so, and that among these few there were so many to whom He would not "commit Himself." More genuine conversions took place by His teaching, and by the spiritual influence of His character and conduct than by the miracles. Very few doubted the miracles, questioned their genuineness, or the power which they exhibited. The rulers acknowledged them, said they were done by Beelzebub; the people believed them;

but both were little influenced by them. They were awed but not convinced, amazed but not converted. Why?

They applied a principle referred to in their law. If a false prophet arose among them, working miracles, trying to lead them away, they were to consider it a trial of their fidelity and steadfastness, not an evidence of Divinity or Messiahship. The maxim was difficult of application, required extreme caution, great discrimination; it was dangerous in the hands of vain, unscrupulous men. But the priests, with the confidence of their class, had no fear, saw not the slightest danger. They applied it to Christ, and so the miracles fell powerless. With the people they were no proof of Divinity. Prophets and saintly men in days gone by had performed them, and they were not Divine. Might it not be the same with Him?

But the miracles of Jesus draw attention to His character and claim. The one throws light upon the other. A miracle *of itself* proves nothing. No quantity of miraculous power proves anything but its own existence. There must be some assertion, some claim put forth, before there can be anything for the miracle to verify or guarantee. In Christ's case there was a great and exceptional claim. He claimed to be one with the Father—one with God. The prophets wrought miracles, but they claimed only delegated power, repudiated the thought that it was of themselves. They acted by the authority of another. Jesus asserted that the power was of Himself, inherent, not delegated. No one before Christ claimed Divinity, so their miracles could not be an evidence of it. But Jesus claimed it, and so the miracles become a guarantee of it, proof of the truth of the assertion. The miracles are understood through the claim, and the claim is verified by the miracles. The people could not come up to the thought of His Divinity, and so they could not understand His miracles. In degrading the person they degraded the works. In looking upon Christ only as a man, or even as a prophet, they looked upon the works only as wonders, nothing more.

The Divinity of Jesus is the key that unlocks the treasures of the Gospel. It created Christianity, gave it its power and

permanency. It was not the miracles, however great they be, that created the moral force, the spiritual influence which is gradually permeating society, restraining passion, and lifting men up to higher conceptions of life and duty, that fascinated and sustained the thought of the disciples everywhere, that changed the rude, unlettered fishermen into the fearless pioneers and dauntless missionaries that they were, and that is still drawing men and women of every nation out of the degradation of despair and sin into the purity and blessedness of a saintly life. Nor was it the blamelessness of His character. Nor was it His teaching. True, never man spake like Him; but, taken alone, the highest and holiest teaching might have seemed to men to be no more than the inspiration of a prophet, the words of highest genius. Nor was it His death. What gave power to the death, changed the despised cross into a moral power, gave to an ignominious death such a stupendous spiritual significance? He predicted, no doubt, that His death would draw all men unto Him, but who was He that His death should do so? Nor was it His resurrection. It did much; confirmed a hope, became witness to a great truth beyond itself, but the moral power of Christianity springs not from the fact that one rose from the dead, but from the character of the person who rose. None of these things, nor all of them, will account for the influence of Christ in Christianity. Beyond the miracles, and the teaching, and the death, and the resurrection, beyond all separate facts and incidents, another truth, in whose light all other things are explained and justified, is discerned, namely, the Person of the Lord Himself. It is not the miracles, but the Worker; not the character but its living Subject; not the teaching, but the Teacher; not even the death, nor the resurrection, but *He* who died and rose, upon whom Christian faith ultimately rests, and the Christian religion is permanently founded. The power of Christianity lies in the personality of Jesus, in the fact that He was Emmanuel, God with us, in reality and not in name "the Son of the living God."

Christian Hope.

“AND EVERY MAN THAT HATH THIS HOPE IN HIM PURIFIETH HIMSELF, EVEN AS HE IS PURE.”—1 *John* iii. 3.

IN the first years of the Church human hate found vent in murderous onslaughts on Christian teachers.

The Church had weathered many a storm when John wrote this epistle. Each storm had left its mark. The Church had been depleted of its chiefs. Stephen, James, Paul, Peter, had gone home to be crowned. John only had escaped. He was providentially living on. He had special work to do for Jesus. John waits for the ordeal and honour of martyrdom, until he has uttered his all-sufficient protest against the fanciful scepticism which denied his humanity, and until he had written his impregnable gospel on the Lord's Divinity. Who so able to do these two things as the disciple who leaned his head upon His bosom, and who realized most of the under-currents of His life? John lived to this sorrowful necessity.

The severe language of the apostle makes it clear that he saw the evil of doubtful disputations, that he detected moral laxity hand in hand with controversial zest. Men were and are ready to champion a notion, a crotchet, indifferent to the exercise of practical godliness. This led him to estimate their connection with Christ. Connection with Christ implied more to John than controversial zest; viz., “Walking in the light,” “cleansed from all sin by the blood of Christ,” and Christian zest directed to the attainment of Divine purity “as He is pure.”

1. This hope. Carlyle said, “Man is, properly speaking, based upon hope, he has no other possession but hope, this world is emphatically the place of hope.” R. Baxter said, “Hope is the spring which sets all the wheels going.” Hope, like some unseen omnipresence, governs this realm of men. The child just waking up into life, the aged waiting for the final summons. The agriculturalist, despite precarious weather, toils on; the merchant,

despite that the price falls, buys again. Despite the dangers of the ocean, the marine enterprise thrives. The soldier is led by it into the hell of battle. The miser hopes to make his secret store bigger. The wheel of fortune is going to turn more favourably for the speculator. The country tramp hopes in the general gullibility. The felon in secrecy, then in human and heavenly mercy. The sick and dying hope for health and life. The suicide plunges out of life in hope. Who would pray or preach but for hope? These earthly hopes move to action corresponding; so does this. Let the emphasis lie in the word *THIS* hope. This hope in contradistinction to every other hope. It is stated in the preceding verse, "We shall be like Him." "We shall see Him as He is."

2. Each heart develops Heaven in an aspect most felicitous to itself. The life of Heaven is the opposite or the complement of the life of earth. Is life happy? Heaven is more so. Is life full of trial and grief? Heaven is its opposite.

"They shall hunger no more" has peculiar attraction for those who on earth have known the pinching of poverty. Its rest is the charm to earth's weary ones. Its health to earth's frail sick ones. Its immortality is the great charm to those who have been most heavily bereaved. These revelations of Heaven are precious just as we feel life's friction.

Several things brought "Divine resemblance" into the forefront of John's Heaven. (1) The brightest and strongest of the saints see more flaws in themselves than outsiders see, and tremendously feel their own frailty. This patriarchal saint remembers the hole of the pit from whence he had been digged, remembered his narrowness, irritability, vindictiveness. Out of this remembrance had grown his present gentleness, &c. What struggles would he speak of could he tell us how he reached his perfection! Fully alive to this warped degenerate flesh, as he gave himself to the struggle again, he did so in this spirit of hope "we shall be like Him." (2) As a chief of the Church he had seen many a weak one struggle, struggle to be true and pure. He had seen many a blunder. In the hearing of these frail, blundering, yet struggling brethren, he says, "We shall be like

Him." (3) The hydra-head of heresy and sin was lifted within the Church. It was an unhappy picture upon which he looked, but he looked upward and beyond, just a little, and saw a brighter picture. Himself and his brethren no longer made ignoble by sin's shadow, no longer tortured by its strength or shame, but radiant and holy, "like Him." This moral beauty it is which allures John. Not crowns, nor thrones, nor palms, nor songs, but spiritual resemblance to Christ.

3. Remember the platform from which he speaks. (1) That of age. Age is a thing to which we turn our gentler side. Human life out of commission, dismantled, is to us a sorrowful, pitiful thing, we do not always heed, but we feel the fascinations of its counsels. John was aged and infirm. Shorn of his strength, on the margin of the grave, earth vanishing to a point, the sense of his own mortality was deepened by death's havoc in the apostolic circle, but he is serene in the hope of life beyond. The taunting voice of the Sadducee was not hushed. Nations were dying "without a hope to cheer the tomb," but to him "death was swallowed up of life." I shall live. "We shall see Him," &c. (2) That of controversy. Men were then perplexed with the mystery of God, and were formulating their theories of His being and of His action. What blunders have they made? What caricatures of Divinity have they evolved? "It doth not appear," &c., implies a limit to our powers of knowing. John had seen many wonderful providences, His chosen destroyed, His Church assailed, His apostles devoured. He shrank from the distortions of the venturesome and from his own perplexed fancies. "We shall see Him as He is," not as we have guessed Him, not the one-sided, or many-sided Being of our mad efforts, &c. "As He is."

4. This is good cheer for earth's afflicted, who have ever been looking up to Him through a veil, through the encompassing cloud, "we shall see Him," &c.

5. Good cheer and stimulant for the Christian zest which, while grateful for all instrumentalities which lift Godward or bring God near, be it the voice of the sea, or chirp of sparrow, the daisy at our feet, or the bespangled heavens, the voice of the

prophet, or the silent Bible, yet longs to get above all intervening ministries and mediums to behold His face.

6. This implies all our mortal disabilities gone, so that we shall look upon His face without death. No more necessary and merciful thrusting into the rock; no more omnipotence in the guise of a wrestling man; no more images of the Invisible; no more the all-glorious God toned down to bearableness by the darkened glass. "As He is."

7. There is a depth of meaning in this particularly applicable to John. He was particularly one of the children of the bride-chamber. John understood more of Christ than any other. He was more to John than to any other. The presence of the Bridegroom was their festival. His absence was the hour of sorrow and fasting. The mourning and fasting of His colleagues was finished. They had been summoned to the marriage feast. John was waiting like a bereaved, sorrowful spouse, hence he exclaims, "We shall see Him as He is."

8. "As He is." What recollections John had of what He was. "As He is," not now crushed by sorrow, not now crowned with thorns, not now the object of the rude military jest, or brutal malice. "As He is," crowned with the many crowns, centre of universal love.

9. The joy seems doubly John's, but yet not less ours. We are children of the bride-chamber. It is our time of mourning and fasting, for our Spouse is absent, "Whom having not seen we love." But our love shall not for ever have to climb up to Him through the spheres. Even to us the Bridegroom shall appear. Even "we shall see Him as He is." This hope is the inspiration of our prolonged and ever deepening affection.

MORPETH.

JOHN HOGG.



"He who brings ridicule to bear against Truth, finds in his hand a blade without a hilt. The most sparkling and pointed flame of wit flickers and expires against the incombustible walls of her sanctuary."—
LANDOR.

A Threefold Character.

“JUDAS, ONE OF THE TWELVE.”—*Matthew* xxvi. 47.

“JUDAS, WHICH HAD BETRAYED HIM.”—*Matthew* xxvii. 3.

“JUDAS WENT AND HANGED HIMSELF.”—*Matthew* xxvii. 5.

THESE three are one. Here is a strange *trinity*, and a terrible tragedy. A more remarkable instance of *treble-dealing* could not well be found. In the first passage the dealing of Christ with Judas is implied; in the second the dealing of Judas with Christ is spoken of; and in the third the dealing of Judas with himself is made known. The Saviour called this man to be “one of the twelve;” this man chose “to betray” his Lord, and, after committing such a mean, dastardly act, he had the decency to go and “hang himself.” Thus a *threefold character* is fully, fairly, and foully established. Cords may be improved by *folds*, but characters are completely destroyed by such encumbrances. Every strand added to *simplicity* only serves to mar the strength and beauty thereof, which consist in just the mere *one fold*. The first remove from this prime excellency of character is *duplicity*, and that is doubly detestable. But here is a man who has obtained the unenviable distinction of occupying a place, still further apart from that quality, which is the chief adornment of human character. Consider him as *Disciple*, *Traitor*, and *Suicide*.

I.—THE DISCIPLE. How came he, in the first place, to be numbered with the twelve is a question, like many others, that is easier asked than answered. Judas, among the disciples of Christ! It is impossible not to express wonderment at such a phenomenon! An interrogation of this kind suggests itself forcibly to the mind, “Friend”—or rather Foe of Jesus—“how camest thou in hither?” Of all persons in the world how ever didst thou contrive to obtain part of this ministry? Is it not distinctly stated in Holy Writ that “Unto the wicked God saith,

what hast thou to do to declare My statutes, or that thou shouldest take My covenant in thy mouth? Seeing thou hatest instruction, and castest My words behind thee. When thou sawest a thief then thou consentedst with him." And yet, here is the veriest thief, passing as an accredited apostle of the Lord Jesus. Could the Master of the small band of disciples have been *deceived* in the case of this one dishonest follower? That is incredible. For "He knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man; for He knew what was in man." Could He then have wished to deceive the outer world as to the real character of those chosen few, who composed the inner circle of His disciples, and who formed the very nucleus of His Church? That supposition is more untenable still. He never claimed *infallibility* for them. Though they enjoyed the highest privileges, in constant companionship with, and closest relationship to, the Divine Teacher, yet they were all very human, and this one, in particular, beyond the rest. At no period in its history, from its foundation until now, has the Church of Christ been wholly made up of "saints made *perfect*." That is a state at which it will only arrive in glory. Unfortunately, many there are, to this day, who claim to belong to the *Church* of Christ, who produce no manner of title to show that they are vitally related to the *Christ* of the Church. The original type and pristine character are still maintained. Iscariot the *counterfeit* will ever be found alongside Nathanael the *genuine*—"the Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile."

II.—THE TRAITOR. "Men are not what they seem." Treacherous he *was*. He only *appeared* true. Inside the sheep's clothing there lurked a ravening wolf. *Disciple* was but an assumed appellation, *betray*er was his appropriate epithet, and as such, he will evermore be branded to the end of time. His place in history must remain unique, his foul deed unparalleled, and his black crime without a possible match, or even an approximate repetition.

Peter's denial of his Lord, though strongly emphasised and profanely backed with oaths, seems but mild presumption when

compared with the base, daring act of Judas, which for very blackness cannot be depicted. The former was *unpremeditated*, and committed in a *weak* moment, at the strong impulse of the occasion, but the latter was *planned* and *plotted*, and deliberately carried out in cold blood. So dark a plot could not be hatched in a day; it was the mature result of long brooding, and so diabolically successful was he in the hypocrite's part he played, that he does not appear to have excited the least suspicion. Verily "the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked: who can know it?"

III.—THE SUICIDE. There, at length, is the bitter end. From step to step the course of this man has been seen growing gradually worse and darker by degrees, until, finally, it is abruptly cut short, and he landed in darkness, as darkness itself.

At an early stage in his discipleship he showed unmistakeable signs of a false and lying spirit within, which, through want of diligent attention to the heart, whence are the issues of life, and lack of good heed to the timely warning, "Beware of covetousness," developed steadily into deep-rooted love of money, and insatiable greed for gold. Hence the tragic termination—*disappointment, desperation, and death*. It is ever so in sin. Its natural direction is downwards; and, as a rule, it is a slow descent. All they that walk its ways are "surely set in slippery places." Its *course* is like that of a river, ever deepening and ever widening as it flows onwards. Its *progress* is as that of a stone, ever gaining increased *momentum* as it rolls down hill. Its *growth* is similar to that of a tree, ever striking its roots deeper and faster into the earth, as it pushes its branches skywards. The hopeful disciple, at the beginning, through a heart he had long "exercised with covetous practices," becomes in the end a hopeless, miserable *felo de se*.

"Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death"—*obsta principis*. The sinner is condemned, the Saviour is justified, God is true, though every man be a liar.

Christian Progress.

“AND BESIDE THIS, GIVING ALL DILIGENCE, ADD TO YOUR FAITH VIRTUE; AND TO VIRTUE KNOWLEDGE; AND TO KNOWLEDGE TEMPERANCE; AND TO TEMPERANCE PATIENCE; AND TO PATIENCE GODLINESS; AND TO GODLINESS BROTHERLY KINDNESS; AND TO BROTHERLY KINDNESS CHARITY. FOR IF THESE THINGS BE IN YOU, AND ABOUND, THEY MAKE YOU THAT YE SHALL NEITHER BE BARREN NOR UNFRUITFUL IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST. BUT HE THAT LACKETH THESE THINGS IS BLIND, AND CANNOT SEE AFAR OFF, AND HATH FORGOTTEN THAT HE WAS PURGED FROM HIS OLD SINS.”—2 *Peter* i. 5-9.

In these verses notice—

I.—THE GRACES THE CHRISTIAN MUST CULTIVATE. (a) Add to your faith *courage*. The word denotes force, energy, strength, manly vigour. Courage was needed in making a profession of religion in times of persecution, and we need it now. (b) Add to courage *prudence*. The apostle means full and exact information of spiritual truths, and also discretion in the wise application of that knowledge to the important duties of life. (c) Add to prudence *self control*; that is, a complete mastery over our appetites, and passions, and affections. (Compare 1 Cor. ix. 26, 27.) (d) Add to self control *patience*. Learn to bear trials without murmuring; disappointments without vexation; afflictions without fretfulness; and bereavements with submission to the will of God. (e) Add to patience *piety*. Seek to gain daily, amid all the trials of life, a deeper reverence for God, a more loving trust in Him, and a clearer consciousness of His favour. (f) Add to piety *love to the Christian brotherhood*. (g) Add to this love *a love still greater, even love to all mankind*. Remember the command of Jesus, “Love your enemies,” &c. This is the complete circle of the Christian graces, cultivate each and all of them with diligence. Notice—

II.—THE BENEFITS ARISING FROM THE CULTIVATION OF THESE GRACES.

(a) *The activities of life are developed*. “If these graces be in you, and are increasing, ye will not be *idle*.” The true

Christian joins heartily in the work of the Church, He feels within him the stirring of mighty impulses, and he must of necessity work. (b) *The results of an active life will be manifested.* "Ye will not be unfruitful." The true Christian does not live in vain. The work he does in the world is ever productive of good, he goes forth bearing precious seed, sowing in the morning and in the evening, scattering the seed broadcast over the fields with a liberal hand, knowing well that bounteous Heaven deals kindly with the honest workman, and in the years to come he will gather in a plentiful harvest. Notice—

III.—THE ANOMALOUS CHARACTER OF A CHRISTIAN WHO LACKS THESE GRACES.

He is a Christian and not a Christian. His religion has done nothing for him, and he has done nothing for his religion. He is not a single step forward from the starting post. (a) *He is short-sighted, or totally blind.* The sun has risen, certainly, but without advantage to him. He has wilfully closed his eyes, and stands winking and blinking, and cannot tell whether it is light or dark, or, whether it is the sun or moon that is shining upon him. (b) *His memory is defective.* It is evident that he keeps no record of the mercies of God; He is a pitiable object, with a darkened understanding and a thankless heart, turning back again to the sin in which he formerly grovelled.

WILLENHALL.

JOSEPH SHENTON.

ORIGINAL SIMILITUDES.

Beware of your very sombre religionists, for the shadow ever lengthens as the sun declines.

A good novel is like the sparkling and translucent river, mirroring in its flow the everlasting stars that rule the destiny of the world.

All souls have a garment of their own, and that is their character. This garment is woven by themselves alone, and what they weave here, they will wear yonder in eternity.

Satire is the east wind of thought, trying alike to the blood and the temper.

D. T.

Homiletical Commentary.

NOTES ON THE EPISTLE OF JAMES.

“The Golden Rule.”

Chapter ii. 5-9.—“HEARKEN, MY BELOVED BRETHREN, HATH NOT GOD CHOSEN THE POOR OF THIS WORLD RICH IN FAITH, AND HEIRS OF THE KINGDOM WHICH HE HATH PROMISED TO THEM THAT LOVE HIM? BUT YE HAVE DESPISED THE POOR. DO NOT RICH MEN OPPRESS YOU, AND DRAW YOU BEFORE THE JUDGMENT SEATS? DO NOT THEY BLASPHEME THAT WORTHY NAME BY THE WHICH YE ARE CALLED? IF YE FULFIL THE ROYAL LAW ACCORDING TO THE SCRIPTURE, THOU SHALT LOVE THY NEIGHBOUR AS THYSELF, YE DO WELL: BUT IF YE HAVE RESPECT TO PERSONS, YE COMMIT SIN, AND ARE CONVINCED OF THE LAW AS TRANSGRESSORS.”

THE early Christian churches were made up for the most part of poor people. Here and there you might come upon a well-to-do or even rich member, but on the whole the congregations were composed of “not many wise, not many noble, not many mighty.”

The rich poor. They were poor, that is so far as this world was concerned, but they were rich so far as another world was concerned—the world of faith. A man may be very poor and at the same time very rich; poor in this world, he may be rich in another. The world of sense is not the only world in which there is the possession and enjoyment of riches; there is the world of faith as well,—a world in which there are unsearchable riches, treasures that cannot fade away, where the very poorest may be rich toward God. The knowledge of God, the love of Christ, and the comfort of the Holy Ghost,—forgiveness

of sin, the favour of God, and the peace and joy that flow from these,—holiness of life, growth in grace, and spiritual hopes that reach upward to God; suppose a man to be in the constant possession of these, would it be out of place to say he was a rich man, would it be out of place to treat him with the respect and honour befitting such spiritual wealth? Suppose, in addition, that all this spiritual wealth was but the earnest, the first-fruits of what he was by-and-bye to possess; suppose him to be the heir of this spiritual kingdom, a prince on the way to his inheritance,—how much more evident will it appear that he ought to be treated becomingly, with the respect and the honour due to his rank and riches.

This is the argument with which the apostle enforces his rebuke against “respect of persons.” These poor people who had been disparaged and despised, who had been set at nought even in their solemn assemblies, were something other than poor people; they were the chosen of God, they were rich in faith, they were heirs of the promised kingdom, and this being so, had not the “respect of persons” been unbecoming and unworthy? Was not God’s choice something? Was not their present holy and faithful walk something? Was not their assured prospect of eternal felicity something? Did not every consideration urge them to honour the poor? “Hearken, my beloved brethren, hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which He hath promised to them that love Him? But ye have despised the poor.” If, indeed, the rich people—for whose sake they had despised the poor—had been friendly, if they had been forward to show favour, if they had manifested anything like an interest in their success, then it might have been charitably said for them, that in the eagerness of their gratitude to the rich they had overlooked what was due to the poor; but there had been nothing of this; there had been very much the reverse of this; the rich had been cruel to them,—

No excuse for their conduct. tyrannical, oppressive; they had dragged them before the judgment seats, they had used the power their wealth conferred to persecute and lay them waste, nay, as if to shew how entirely separate they were from those they so evilly en-

treated, these rich men had actually gone so far as to blaspheme the name of Christ,—that worthy name by which they were called; they reviled that holy name, and cast contempt upon all the hopes that were bound up with it. “Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment seats? Do not they blaspheme that worthy name by the which ye are called?” And yet they had fawned upon and flattered these to the disparagement of the poor, God’s chosen ones, rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He hath promised to them that love Him.

The rebuke of the apostle is a severe one; perhaps too severe. Those who have laid themselves open to it may have something to say for themselves, at least the spirit of charity may suggest something to be said for them. Perhaps there has been underlying their reprehensible conduct this extenuating element, the dread lest they should not give the rich neighbour the respect that was his due, as well as the poor neighbour the respect that was his due: perhaps what they have been trying to do has not been so much to depreciate the poor, as to show that they appreciate the rich. The suggestion is a very charitable one, worthy of the love that thinketh no evil; and it seems to have been the thought of the apostle here, forming the transition from the sharp rebuke of “respect of persons,” to the persuasive and winning allurements to the contemplation of that royal law which, once fairly welcomed as the power and principle of the life, will effectually prevent the recurrence of anything like “respect of persons.” But, however, the apostle charitably and wisely goes on to say, but, however, if in your treatment of all classes of people, rich and poor alike, it is your aim and desire to fulfil the royal law, “thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself”; if it is the guiding principle of your conduct to act up to this law, as the Scripture sets it forth, ye will do well; but, and here come in again the tones of warning, but if ye have respect to persons in this way, and work out sin, ye are convicted by this very law itself as transgressors, for every case of “respect of persons” is a breach of the royal law.

Observe, at the outset, that by the fulfilling of the law here is not to be understood complete and absolute fulfilling, as if any

man could in this life perfectly obey it. Scripture nowhere gives its countenance to the vain imagination that he can yield sinless

What about obedience to God's holy, just, and good law.
Perfectionism ? Everywhere it insists upon it that even where the *reign* of sin is cast down, there the *remains* of it are yet to be found, and that where these remains are, there will be enough of evil to make even the most sincere obedience very far from perfect. "If we say that we have no sin we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect." "If I say I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse; if I justify myself, mine own mouth shall condemn me." And this is in harmony with the experience of the best of men in all ages. The holier men are, the more perfect they are, just the more clearly do they perceive how far short they come of the fulfilling of the royal law. The nearer they come to the Ineffable Presence, the more do they feel the searching light searching them through and through, and just the more sincerely and humbly do they lament their want of conformity to, or their transgression of the royal law. Of course

A lowered if you lower the demands of this law, if you bring
law it down to the level of your every-day abilities, or
easily obeyed only a little above these, so that a very little effort will enable you to rise to it, in such a case it will not be difficult to fulfil it; lower its precepts far enough, and anybody could obey them; but keep it where it is and as it is, let it be the bright, unspotted reflection of the holiness of the holy will of God Himself, let its place and position be the place and position which it has according to the Scripture, and then say whether any mere man is able in this life perfectly to keep the commandments of God? It is the teaching of the Scriptures and it is the experience of the saints, that "there is none upon the earth that doeth good and sinneth not"; that "in many things we offend all"; and that man has read his own heart to little purpose who cherishes the fond imagination that he can fulfil the royal law according to the Scripture.

James calls the law of God, the Divine summary of it, the royal law; and this for obvious reasons. It is the *supreme* law;

it is the *authoritative, ultimate, all-regulating* law. As there is nothing superior to it, so everything is subordinate to it. We are subject to it in all things. It demands our allegiance over the whole sphere of our existence; all our conduct is to be brought to it as the standard; our character must be brought to the test of its approval or disapproval. It is the rightful sovereign over all our thoughts, words, and actions; it must rule in heart, speech, and behaviour. What it says is final; from its commands there is no appeal; it is the royal law. But more than this, and even more specially here, it is called the royal law because of its *graciousness*; because of the sweet spirit of kindness that pervades it; because of the love with which it is full. It is the prerogative and it is the ornament of the kingly to be kindly, of the royal to win to itself the affections of the loyal; and so we have here in this royal law the essence of all love, the summing up of all that is beautiful and gracious, love to God and love to man. The royal law has the inherent right to command; but is it not worthy to command? Can there be anything more lovely, more winning, more attractive? It has a queenly bearing with it; but it has also a most queenly smile; and those who are best acquainted with it say of it: My "delight is in the law of the Lord"; it is "sweeter than honey and the honeycomb"; "Thy statutes have been my song"; "at midnight I will sing praises unto Thee because of Thy judgments." *The loyal heart is glad to acknowledge the royal law.*

The portion of it which the apostle quotes, is that which more immediately concerns his present purpose. It is not their love to God, which in the conduct of these respecters of persons is in question, it is their love to each other, and so leaving out of account the first half of the royal law, he draws pointed attention to the second, and indeed one has but to look into it to see what a thorough condemnation there is in it of everything of the kind. Let a man love his neighbour as he loves himself, and he will never put a slight upon, or causelessly vex that neighbour, he will never disparage him, he will never despise him, for where this royal law

The
Royal Law is
Supreme.

And Gracious.

The Second
Table of the
Law.

holds sway, "respect of persons" cannot exist. Whatever may be said about its being difficult, or impossible to obey it, there can be no question but that if it were obeyed this "respect of persons" would have no place. If I loved my neighbour as I love myself it would be impossible for me to slight him, if my neighbour loved me as he loves himself it would be impossible he could ever slight me, and if this royal law were the rule with all neighbours, spreading its benign and blessed influence over all mankind, "honour to whom honour" would be the universal experience, as it would be the universal tribute. "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," is the condition of peace and good-will among men.

But is not this law far above the reach of men? Do we not feel, if we do not say, that obedience to such a command is out of the question? And, in view of it, does there not sometimes take possession of us a melancholy acquiescence in a very imperfect and fragmentary honouring of a precept that is so far above us. "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." It is too high, we cannot attain unto it; it may be for angels, but it is not for men, it may be for Heaven, but it is not for earth. It is this despair of being able to obey the law which lies at the root of so much lethargic indifference to its demands; it is this which is the cause of much of the actual disobedience with which these demands are met. "I cannot love my neighbour as I love myself!" Let me once believe this, let me, without any great sense of self-blame, acquiesce in this, let me accept this as the

<p>Despair of obeying leads to disobeying.</p>	<p>natural mood of mind I may cherish to my neighbour, and I shall not remain long in this mood; I shall soon take up with a worse mood than this; if I do not love him as myself I shall not do to him as I would wish him to do to me, I shall treat him with less concern than I shall treat myself, and when I have got that length I shall soon take the next step to "respect of persons," to oppression, and to cruel injustice in any and in every shape. The safe-guard of our neighbour's rights lies in our loving him as we love ourselves: tamper with this in the slightest degree, and it is only a matter of time till we shall betray them to the first selfish motive or</p>
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desire. *If we would value justice we must preserve love.* The protection which God casts round each one of us is this royal law: "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

But now, what is it we are here commanded to do? When I am asked to love my neighbour as I love myself, what is meant? For it may be we have got hold of erroneous and exaggerated ideas about this; perhaps if we had right and scriptural views

Underneath
the Golden
Rule lies
Justice.

about it we should be the more inclined and the more persuaded, aye, and the more enabled to obey it.

What is meant by loving my neighbour as myself?

In The Sermon on the Mount there is a parallel passage to this, and curiously enough it, as well as this one, is declared to be the sum of the law and the prophets. It is this: "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." Bring the one passage to bear upon the other, and there will be little difficulty in getting at the meaning of either, they will shed light the one upon the other. It would be wrong for your neighbour to wish that you should render services to him to the detriment of others who depend upon these services; then it is no part of the love you owe him to divert these services away from these to him: that is, the command, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" does not require that you shall serve one man in the same way, after the same manner, and to the same extent, as it may be your duty to serve another man. Considerations of various kinds come in to modify the amount of actual service that you may be rightly required to give to this neighbour or to that, considerations of family, of city, of church, of country; considerations which you alone can take into account, and of which you alone are the judge. Whatsoever, and only whatsoever, ye would that men should do to you, do you even so to them. This is the rule by which we are to measure the greater or less service which the command to love our neighbours as ourselves implies, and it is a rule which lets us see that the royal law does not demand what is impossible, or what it would be inconsistent with other duties to render. It lets us see that that despairing feeling with which we regarded the royal law was due to our own ignorance or neglect of its

meaning. Rightly interpreted it requires nothing but what is holy and just and good.

“Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.” You love *yourself* really, justly ; you are to love *him* really, justly. You cherish *your own* reputation, interests, feelings ; you are as really, as justly, to cherish *his* reputation, interests, feelings. You would not injure, defraud, corrupt *yourself* ; you will not injure, defraud, corrupt *him* !

This Commandment is exceeding broad.

The royal law, the golden rule ; when once we obey these as we know we ought to obey them, and, as in the strength of God, we could obey them ; would not the very peace of Heaven fill our hearts, would not the blessedness of Heaven be anticipated even here, Paradise lost become Paradise restored !

This is the close of the section of the epistle which relates to “Respect of Persons.” Before we leave it, let each ask himself the question, have I loved my neighbour as I have loved myself ? Can I hope to be able to do this unless I be endowed with the Spirit of love from on high ? Unbelievers in the special doctrines of Christianity, of atonement, and the new birth, tell us that all that we need is to love God and man, that the promise of life eternal is made to all such as do this ; this and nothing more ! Yes, *that is all we need, and what we need is all that*. Do these men not know that they are uttering the dreariest and the most hollow of all dreary and hollow things if there be not an atonement and a new birth to confer upon us this very thing, *this power to love God and man, this ability to obey the royal law* ? They say The Sermon on the Mount is all we need ; The Sermon on the Mount without an atonement and the new birth would be the anticipation of the day of judgment without the possibility of the acquittal of even one soul ! Power to become sons of God.

The power of
Christ
needed for the
example of
Christ.

Ye must be born again, renewed, transformed in the spirit of our minds, endowed with the spirit of love ; this is what we need, and this is the gospel which is preached unto us ! “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.” It is too high, we cannot attain unto it.

Yea, but there is One who perfectly obeyed it, magnified, and made it honourable, and who is able and willing to bestow upon us the power to obey it. If we have the mind of Christ we are of those who are reaching up to obey the royal law, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."—Amen and Amen.

GLASGOW.

PETER RUTHERFORD.

RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION, OR PROSECUTION.

It is true that persecution, unless thoroughgoing, seldom succeeds. The mere irritation and annoyance of punishment which stops short of complete suppression or extermination has very seldom any effect in altering men's religious convictions. I suppose that without exaggeration the penal laws which were in force in Ireland in the last century were without parallel in the history of the world. They existed for a century and a half, and they produced upon the religious convictions of the people absolutely no effect whatever. They could not exterminate the Irish people. Everything short of that which it was possible for law to do was done, and without effect. And, therefore, no doubt, the observation is correct that, as a general rule, persecution, unless far more extreme than in England in the nineteenth century is possible, is certain to be in vain. It is also true, and I cannot help assenting to it, that it is a very easy form of virtue. It is a more difficult form of virtue quietly and unostentatiously to obey what we believe to be God's will in our own lives. It is not very easy to do it; and it makes much less noise in the world. It is very easy to turn upon somebody else who differs from us, and in the guise of zeal for God's honour to attack somebody for a difference of opinion, whose life may be more pleasing to God and more conducive to His honour than our own.—*Lord Chief Justice Coleridge.*

CURIOSITY LOW, AND LOFTY.

"There is a mean curiosity, as of a child opening a forbidden door, or a servant prying into his master's business; and a noble curiosity, questioning in the front of danger the source of the great river beyond the sand,—the place of the great continents beyond the sea; a nobler curiosity still, which questions of the source of the River of Life, and of the space of the Continent of Heaven, things which the angels desire to look into."—*Ruskin.*

SEEDS OF SERMONS ON THE SECOND BOOK OF
THE KINGS.

Some Lessons from the History of Kings.

"IN THE TWENTY AND SEVENTH YEAR OF JEROBOAM," &c.—
2 *Kings* xv.

THE Mighty Governor of the universe is represented as saying to the Jewish nation, "I gave thee a king in Mine anger." (Hosea xiii. 2.) And truly, with a few exceptions here and there through the ages, kings have proved malific scourges of the race. In this chapter there are mentioned no less than seven of those men who are called kings, but who, instead of having one grain of moral royalty in their souls, were contemptible serfs to the last degree, slaves to their passions of sensuality and greed. How many conventional kings in all ages are moral paupers and fiendish vassals. Glance for a moment at each of the so-called kings before us. Here is *Azariah*, elsewhere called *Uzziah*, who was the son and successor of *Amaziah*. Here is *Zacariah*, the son

and successor of *Jeroboam*, the second king of Israel, who reigned only six months, and then fell by the hand of *Shallum*. Here is *Shallum*, the fifteenth king of Israel, and the murderer of *Zachariah*, and who in his turn was murdered. Here is *Menahem*, the son of *Gadi*, who having slain *Shallum*, reigned in his stead ten years, a reign characterised by ruthless cruelty and tyrannic oppression. Here is *Pekahiah*, the son and successor of *Menahem*, who reigned two years over Israel, and then was assassinated by *Pekah*. Here is *Pekah*, who was a general of the Israelitish army, and assassinated king *Pekahiah* in his palace, and usurped the government, reigning twenty years. Here is *Jotham*, the son and successor of *Uzziah*, the eleventh king of Judah

who reigned for sixteen years. He, perhaps, was the least wicked of all these moral monsters.

The whole chapter reminds us of several things worth note.

I.—THE FALLIBILITY OF BIBLICAL HISTORIANS. Who wrote these books of the Kings? No one knows. And yet that ignorant superstition which prevails even in what are called orthodox Churches, regards the utterances of this anonymous writer as those of an inspired man. This man professes to give the "Word of the Lord." But that Word, in some cases, is repugnant alike to our moral sense and common intuitions. He says, too, that such and such kings, whose moral character and conduct clash not only with the teachings of Christ, but with all the dictates of our reason, did that which was "right in the sight of the Lord." If we take him as a faithful chronicler of the facts of human history which he records, we stretch our credulity. But to take him as an oracle of the Divine, transcends our faculty of belief. What we say of the

writer of this book applies to most of the chroniclers of the Old Testament. In denying the infallibility of such men, we honour, and not dishonour, the "Word of the Lord." "Let us prove all things, and hold fast to that which is true," true to our own moral intuitions, and to the teachings and example of Christ. This chapter reminds us of—

II.—THE EXISTENCE OF RETRIBUTION IN THIS LIFE. Here we discover retribution in the leprosy of Azariah, and in the fate of the other kings. Of Azariah it is said, "The Lord smote the king so that he was a leper unto the day of his death, and dwelt in a several house." Of all physical afflictions, perhaps, that of leprosy is the most painful and revolting. It eats out the life and dooms a man to solitude. Disease strikes princes as well as paupers. Then see how the other monsters fared, the murderer is murdered, the slayer is slain; Shallum strikes down Zachariah; Menahem strikes down Shallum, and Pul, the king of Assyria, strikes Menahem with a terrible blow of humiliation and oppression. Pekah smites Pekahiah, and

reigned twenty years when he was himself struck down by the blow of an assassinator. Truly, even in this life, "With what measure ye mete it shall be meted to you again." Though retribution here may not be complete and adequate, still it is at work everywhere in human society. It comes as a pledge and a prophecy of that realm beyond the grave, where every man shall be dealt with according to his works. This chapter reminds us of—

III.—THE MIGHTINESS OF RELIGIOUS ERROR. In this chapter there is the record of long periods and of great changes. Battles are fought, revolutions are effected, monarch succeeds monarch, and ages come and go, but one thing remains, that is, idolatry, "The high places were not removed, the people sacrificed and burnt incense still on the high places" (verses 4 and 34).

Amongst the many evil tendencies of man there is none so mighty and influential as the *religious*. Two facts will account for this.

First: *The strength of the religious element in man.* Burke and others of the wisest

of the race, have designated man as a religious animal. Religion with man is not a faculty but the substratum in which all the faculties inhere, it is the core and the root of his nature. Hence wherever man is found, if he has no home he has a shrine, no friend he has a god. Notice—

Secondly: *The might of selfishness in man.* What man needs most, presents the greatest motives to human avarice and ambition. Hence the creation and support of priests which appears in connection with every religious system; vested interest is almost an omnipotent agent in keeping up *religious* evils. Not only is it so in heathen temples but in what are called Christian churches, and denominational sects. Alas, that men should have any vested interest in religion! This chapter reminds us of—

IV.—THE CRAVEN-HEARTEDNESS OF GOVERNED PEOPLES. Were the peoples of Judah and Israel really men acting worthy of their humanity, would they have tolerated for a day such monsters as we have in this chapter? The existence of tyrants is the

fault of the people. Let the peoples of the world study the principles of everlasting right, realize the high claims of their manhood, and pursue a course of honest industry, temperate living, manly, independent conduct, for one single age, and all the despots

on thrones would be borne down, or rather borne up, into the Divine field of labour, to work for an honest livelihood. "He that doth not work shall not eat."

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SEEDS OF SERMONS ON THE EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS.

Man in Model Aspects.

"BUT I REJOICED IN THE LORD GREATLY, THAT NOW AT THE LAST YOUR CARE OF ME HATH FLOURISHED AGAIN; WHEREIN YE WERE ALSO CAREFUL, BUT YE LACKED OPPORTUNITY. NOT THAT I SPEAK IN RESPECT OF WANT: FOR I HAVE LEARNED, IN WHATSOEVER STATE I AM, THEREWITH TO BE CONTENT. I KNOW BOTH HOW TO BE ABASED, AND I KNOW HOW TO ABOUND: EVERY WHERE AND IN ALL THINGS I AM INSTRUCTED BOTH TO BE FULL AND TO BE HUNGRY, BOTH TO ABOUND AND TO SUFFER NEED. I CAN DO ALL THINGS THROUGH CHRIST WHICH STRENGTHENETH ME. NOTWITHSTANDING YE HAVE WELL DONE, THAT YE DID COMMUNICATE WITH MY AFFLICTION. NOW YE PHILIPPIANS KNOW ALSO, THAT IN THE BEGINNING OF THE GOSPEL, WHEN I DEPARTED FROM MACEDONIA, NO CHURCH COMMUNICATED WITH ME AS CONCERNING GIVING AND RECEIVING, BUT YE ONLY. FOR EVEN IN THESSALONICA YE SENT ONCE AND AGAIN UNTO MY NECESSITY. NOT BECAUSE I DESIRE A GIFT: BUT I DESIRE FRUIT THAT MAY ABOUND TO YOUR ACCOUNT." —*Philippians* iv. 10-17.

THE apostle now turns his attention to a new subject, and the verses that follow to the close of the chapter seem to

be a kind of postscript, acknowledging in a very graceful manner the various offerings which he had received from

the Philippians by the hands of Epaphroditus. The passage before us may be regarded as presenting *man in certain model aspects*.

I.—Here is man represented as an OBJECT OF CHRISTIAN BENEFICENCE. "But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again."

First: He received their beneficence with *religious gratitude*. "I rejoiced in the Lord, &c." "There is," says Dr. Barry, "in these words an expression of some hitherto disappointed expectation, not wholly unlike the stronger expression of wounded feeling in 2 Tim. iv. 9, 10, 16. At Cæsarea St. Paul would have been necessarily cut off from the European churches: at Rome, the metropolis of universal concourse, he may have expected some earlier communication. But fearing to wound the Philippians by even the semblance of reproof, in their case undeserved, he adds at once, "in which ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity." Epaphroditus would seem to have arrived early, almost as soon as St. Paul's arrival at Rome gave

them the opportunity which they previously lacked."

The contributions which came from the Philippians to him, he *traced to the Lord*. He saw the hand and felt the love of God in their gifts. There is not a man on earth who is not in some measure the object of human beneficence. We are all receiving from others, every day in our life, some kind of good,—physical, intellectual, social, or spiritual. All this good we should devoutly ascribe to the Father of lights, from whom cometh "every good and perfect gift." Whether those of our fellow-men, who confer on us good, do it *with* their will or *against* their will, selfishly or disinterestedly, it matters not so far as our obligation to heaven is concerned. From Him all the good of all kinds and through all channels proceeds.

Secondly: He received their beneficence with *heartly appreciation*. "Notwithstanding (howbeit) ye have well done, that ye did communicate (had fellowship) with my affliction." "Ye have well done." Your beneficence was dictated from a generous sympathy with my

affliction, and it was timely withal. True beneficence is a blessed virtue. "It is more blessed to give than to receive." His appreciation seems to have been deepened by the fact that their beneficence preceded that of other churches. "Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the Gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated (had fellowship) with me as concerning (in the matter of) giving and receiving, but ye only." The time referred to is the period of his leaving Macedonia and Athens for Corinth (Acts xvii. 14). They rendered him help, not only after he had left Macedonia, but before that time, when he had just passed from Philippi to Thessalonica. "At Thessalonica, as at Corinth—both very rich and luxurious communities—he refused maintenance and lived merely by the labour of his own hands (1 Thess. ii. 9; 2 Thess. iii. 8). But it appears from this passage that even then he received, once and again (that is, occasionally, once or twice), some aid from Philippi to supply his need, that is (as in all right exercise of liberality)

to supplement, and not to supersede his own resources." In this also he acts in a model way. There are those ingrates in society who receive help from others as a matter of course, attach little or no value to the good which they are constantly receiving. Aye, and moreover, there are those, too, who instead of becoming bound to the benefactor as friends through gratitude for the favours, not unfrequently become enemies. Ah me, this worst of human vices is, perhaps, the most common. "As there are no laws against ingratitude," says *Seneca*, "so it is utterly impossible to contrive any that in all circumstances shall reach it. If it were actionable, there would not be courts enough in the whole world to try the causes in. There can be no setting a day for the requiting of benefits as for the payment of money; nor any estimate upon the benefits themselves; but the whole matter rests in the conscience of both parties; and then there are so many degrees of it, that the same rule will never serve all."

Thirdly: He received their beneficence with *entire un-*

selfishness. "Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound (increaseth) to your account." He means to say, I do not "desire a gift" for my own sake so much as for yours. I value the gift as an expression and evidence of your faith in Christ. An old writer says, "It is not with any design to draw more from you, but to encourage you to such an exercise of beneficence as will meet with a glorious reward hereafter." True men always value a gift not simply because of its intrinsic value, or even because it will serve their temporal interest, but because of the priceless sentiments of the heart, love, disinterestedness, and friendship which it represents.

We are all objects of beneficence. Let us act as Paul did in this character, accept all human favours with religious gratitude, with hearty appreciation, and with entire unselfishness.

II.—Here is man represented as A SUBJECT OF PROVIDENTIAL VICISSITUDES. "I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith (therein) to be content." "Whatever state."

How constantly changing are our states! Life is in truth a chequered scene. Every hour we pass from one condition or mood to another. We change in mind, body, and circumstances. We alternate between friendship and bereavement, prosperity and adversity, sunshine and storms. Now the aspect in which Paul is seen in passing through these changes is that of *contentment*, and in this respect he is a model to us all. His contentment does not mean *insensibility*, a kind of stoicism; does not mean *indifference* to the condition of others, or a *satisfied complacency* either with his own moral condition or that of the world. It is a *cordial acquiescence in the arrangements of heaven*. "Not my will, but Thine be done." This state of mind is not innate, it is *attained*. Paul "learnt" it. This is moral scholarship of the highest kind.

"Some murmur when their sky is clear
And wholly bright to view,
If one small speck of dark appear
In their great heaven of blue.
And some with thankful love are filled,
If but one streak of light,
One ray of God's great mercy gild
The darkness of their night."

—FRENCH.

III.—Here is man represented as a GENUINE REFORMER. "I can do all things through Christ (in Him) which strengtheneth me." Paul was a genuine reformer. The reformation he sought was not in corrupt legislation, in outward institutions—social, political, or ecclesiastical, in theological systems, or in external behaviour. Such reformations are of little worth. (1) He wrought in the *realms of motive*, the springs of action, to change the moral heart of the world. Every man on earth should act in this character and become a moral reformer. All should study and imitate Paul in this aspect. How did he act as a reformer? (2) In *conscious dependence on Christ*. "I can do all things through Christ." "All things" pertaining to this work as a reformer, not by my own talents, skill, or industry, not in my own strength, but in "Christ which strengtheneth me." Indeed, in Christ's strength what cannot a man do? He can work miracles as the apostles did, he can turn

the moral world upside down, he can create men "anew in Christ Jesus," he can sound a trumpet whose blast shall penetrate the ears of slumbering souls and awake the teeming millions that are sleeping in the dust of worldliness and depravity. "Through Christ which strengtheneth me." Strengthens me by turning me away from things that are temporal to things that are spiritual, rooting my faith in eternal realities, filling and firing me with the love which He had for human souls and for the everlasting Father.

CONCLUSION.—Study well these model aspects of a man who, as an *object of Christian beneficence*, is always religiously grateful, heartily appreciative of the favours he receives and entirely unselfish: as a *subject of providential vicissitudes*, magnanimously contented in every condition and mood of life: and, as a *genuine reformer*, does his work, not in his own strength, but in the power of Christ.

DAVID THOMAS, D.D.
LONDON.

Seedlings.

Homiletic Glances at Psalm cxix.

BY REV. DAVID THOMAS, D.D.

Man's Highest Possession.

"THOU ART MY PORTION, O LORD."

Psalm cxix. 57.

GOD owns man absolutely, indefeasibly, and for ever. This we can in some measure understand. But here is a man who claims the ownership of God Himself. This is wonderful, and yet not only possible but actually experienced. In relation to God as the possession of the soul, three remarks may be offered.

I.—It alone GIVES VALUE TO ALL OTHER POSSESSIONS. The man who can legally call continents and kingdoms his own, is miserably poor in heart withal, if he feels that God is not his,—his Father and his Friend, his All-in-all.

II.—It alone SATISFIES THE CRAVINGS OF THE SOUL. There is a deep, ineradicable craving in the soul for God, and though it comprehend the universe, it would be empty without Him. "My heart and my flesh cry out for the living God."

III.—It alone is ATTAINABLE BY ALL MANKIND. All men can-

not attain great knowledge, great social influence, or great worldly wealth, but all may obtain God as their portion.

"God is all-sufficient," says an old writer. "Get Him for your portion and you have all: then you have infinite wisdom to direct you, infinite knowledge to teach you, infinite mercy to pity and save you, infinite love to care for and comfort you, and infinite power to protect and keep you. If God be yours all His attributes are yours: all His creatures, all His works of providence shall do you good as you have need of them. He is an eternal, full, satisfactory portion. He is an ever-living, ever-loving, ever-present Friend, and without Him you are a cursed creature in every condition, and all things will work against you."

Promptitude in Duty.

"I MADE HASTE AND DELAYED NOT TO KEEP THY COMMANDMENTS."—*Psalm cxix. 60.*

OBSERVE—

I.—Promptitude in duty is SUPREMELY BINDING. Duty is the

supreme end of existence. We are made to "*keep Thy commandments.*" Unless we do this our existence will prove a failure, and a curse. Were we sent here merely to sustain animal existence for a few short years, to amass a little wealth, to attain a little knowledge? No; but to obey the moral laws of our Creator, to embody in our daily life the eternal principles of right, to do the will of God. Even Seneca, whom we call a heathen, has said, "To obey God is perfect liberty, he that does this should be safe, free, and quiet." Observe—

II.—Promptitude in duty is SUPREMELY NECESSARY. The great Creator seems to have made the happiness of all His sentient creation to depend on obedience to His laws. Hence from the microscopic insect, to the huge mammoth, we find pleasures flowing into them through obedience to their instincts. Disobedience is misery in all worlds. Hence the necessity of promptitude in this matter. "*I made haste.*" (1) The sooner it is attended to the better. (2) The longer it is delayed the more difficult to begin. Both the inclination and the power get weaker with every moment's delay. If Lot is to escape the flames he must not linger, if the manslayer is to avoid the stroke of the

avenger he must run. Delay not then—

"To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow,
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,
To the last syllable of recorded time,
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way to dusty death."

Good Society.

"I AM A COMPANION OF ALL THEM THAT FEAR THEE, AND OF THEM THAT KEEP THY PRECEPTS."
—*Psalm cxix.* 63.

GOD has made man for society and society for man. To be "in society" is regarded by the upper ten thousand, and their imitators and sycophants, as being on visiting terms with the grandees of the land, with those who pride themselves on their ancestry and their name. By men of independent spiritual culture and moral nobility, such society is not coveted, to them it is revolting rather than attractive, debasing rather than elevating. "In society," what a miserable cant, what an intellectual degradation! The society, however, to which the text points is the society of the highest type, composed of those who fear God and keep His "*precepts.*"

I.—This is the most HONOURABLE society. It is composed of

those who are "heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ." The frivolities of fashion, the vauntings of pride, the glitter of empty pretensions, the inordinate gratification of the mere senses are unknown and despised in this elevated society. The only honourable society is the society of honourable men, and the only honourable men are those who fear God and keep His commandments.

II.—This is the most HAPPY society. True happiness consists not in what we have but in what we are; it comes not from without, but wells up within; it is not in the titillation of the senses, but in the moral pulsation of the heart. All good men are happy.

III.—This is the most GROWING society. It is large now, composed of an innumerable company of angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect; its numbers increase with every conversion. It will one day not only inherit this earth, but populate all the planets of immensity. Our cravings for society can only be answered by society like this. *Horace Walpole*—no mean authority on worldly society—has written thus: "Don't you find that nine parts in ten of the world are of no use but to make you wish

yourself with the tenth part? I am so far from growing used to mankind by living amongst them, that my natural ferocity and wildness does but every day grow worse. They tire me, they fatigue me; I don't know what to do with them; I don't know what to say to them. I fling open the windows and fancy I want air, and when I get by myself I undress myself and seem to have had people in my pockets, in my plaits, and on my shoulders. I indeed find this fatigue worse in the country than in town, because one can avoid it there and has more resources, but it is there too. I fear 'tis growing old, but I literally seem to have murdered a man whose name was *ennui*, for his ghost is ever before me. They say there is no English word for *ennui*, I think you may translate it most literally by what is called 'entertaining people,' and doing the honours, that is, you sit an hour with somebody you don't know and don't care for, talk about the wind and the weather, and ask a thousand foolish questions which all begin with, 'I think you live a good deal in the country,' or that, 'I think you don't love this thing or that.' Oh, it is dreadful."

God good in Being and good in Action.

"THOU ART GOOD AND DOEST GOOD."—*Psalm cxix. 68.*

HERE we have—

I.—God good in BEING. "*Thou art good.*" Good in the sense of *kindness* and in the sense of *moral perfection*,—the primal Font of all happiness in the universe, and the immutable Standard of all excellence. (1) He is *essentially good*. His goodness is not a quality of Himself, it is Himself. (2) He is *immutably good*. Because He is Himself absolutely unalterable His goodness is immutable. Is He then good by a necessity of His nature? A good man has within him the power of becoming bad, so has a good angel. The highest archangel has, methinks, this power. Has He given the creature a power which He Himself has not? Has He, the benevolent Being, no power to become malignant; He, the Holy One, no power to go wrong? Were this so, wherein would be the virtue of His goodness? There is an infinite spontaneity in Him. But that He is good, and will continue good for ever, is the transcendent glory of His deity. Here we have—

II.—God good in ACTION. "*And doest good.*" This follows as a matter of necessity, a good being must do good. No being

that is not good can do good. Every moral being to *do* good must *be* good. He is the Fountain of life,—a Fountain immaculate, immeasurable, exhaustless, ever active, from which issue worlds and systems and countless tribes of life of every kind.

"O Love, the one sun; O Love, the one sea;
No life has begun that breathes not in Thee;
Thy rays have no limit, Thy waves have no shore,
Thou giv'st without merit to worlds evermore."

A Diseased and Inactive Heart.

"THEIR HEART IS AS FAT AS GREASE."—*Psalm cxix. 70.*

THE word *taphash*, here translated "*fat*," occurs nowhere else in the Bible; it means to be in an insensate condition. *Physically* to have a fat heart is a very serious matter, but *morally* it is more serious still. It implies—

I.—DISEASE. Sensitiveness and tenderness is the morally normal state. Sin petrifies, fossilises the moral sympathies of the soul. It implies—

II.—INACTIVITY. He who physically has a fat heart is more or less dull, stolid, impassive. Sin makes men morally stupid, dull. In fact, sinners are represented in the Bible, not only as asleep, but dead. They are Solo-

mon's sluggard, crying evermore for a little more sleep, a little more slumber.

A Sound Heart.

"LET MY HEART BE SOUND IN THY STATUTES."—*Psalm cxix.* 80.

A HEATHEN prayed for a "sound mind in a sound body." A sound body is, of all earthly blessings, the most priceless. Without it the choicest blessings of material providence can scarcely be relished and enjoyed. But a sound heart is a far greater blessing. With a sound heart man can turn even the trials of life into blessings. A sound heart, like the æolian harp, can catch music from the tempest, or, like the bee, gather honey from weeds and briers.

I.—A sound heart THROBS IN UNISON WITH THE MORAL LAWS

OF THE UNIVERSE. Those laws are the laws of benevolence and truth.

II.—A sound heart is a UNITED heart. It has no fissures, no rents, no distractions, it is one whole. "Unite my heart to fear Thy name."

III.—A sound heart is a STRONG heart. It does not sink under trial, or quail under danger. It beats a healthy moral blood through the soul. Take Moses, Daniel, Paul, as examples of a sound heart. "None of these things move me." "O happy heart," says Quarles, "where piety affecteth, where humility subjecteth, where repentance correcteth, where obedience dissecteth, where perseverance perfecteth, where power protecteth, where devotion projecteth, where charity connecteth."

Days of the Christian Year.

Matthew vi. 27.

(*Fifteenth Sunday after Trinity.*)

"WHICH OF YOU BY TAKING THOUGHT CAN ADD ONE CUBIT UNTO HIS STATURE?"

THESE words of our Lord are most properly taken as—

I.—A DIVINE ARGUMENT FOR HUMAN TRUSTFULNESS. The strain in which the Great Teacher is speaking is one of strong advocacy

of an unworldly and a trustful spirit. A divided allegiance is, he says, impossible. (v. 24.) Anxiety is unnecessary, for God's love provides much greater things than those about which we are so solicitous and will not refuse the less. (v. 25.) Moreover, He who anticipates the wants of his improvident creatures, will not neglect His reverent and industrious children. (v. 26.) The text

provides a fourth reason for child-like confidence in God. *Trustfulness is the only suitable attitude for those as dependent as we are on the Divine.* Think as long as we may, strive as much as we please, we cannot, of ourselves, bring to pass so slight a change in our bodily condition as that of adding a single inch to our height. We are wholly in the hands of God: His touch is needed to secure the smallest good we crave, we are dependent on His skill, on His goodness, on His care, for every change that will occur. Why, then, assume the air of those who can command their own fortune? We should do our humble human part, and then, recognizing our dependence on The Supreme, leave Him to supply our need, to determine our future, to fashion our course. But we may properly take these words of our Master as—

II.—A DIVINE SUGGESTION RESPECTING THE MYSTERY OF GROWTH. Our Lord intimates that we are powerless to add anything to our stature by any effort we may make. He thus suggests to us (1) *The constant Divine element in growth.* Whether we think of the little seedling, the young animal, or the child, when we consider that “reconciliation of permanence and change,” we call *growth*, we have before us that which we can watch,

which we can admire, which we can rejoice in, the stages of which we can denominate, but which we cannot wholly understand, and which we are entirely unable to produce. We may bring together the materials with which it is closely and even vitally connected, but we cannot effectuate it. The constant, simultaneous, and proportionate increase in all the various parts and members of the living organism, this is something which only the Divine hand can outwork. While Jesus Christ clearly intimates this to us, and would have us learn the lesson of conscious dependency and of consequent trustfulness, we shall do well to mark (2) *Our duty to observe the conditions of growth.* It is indeed true that by taking thought we cannot add one cubit to our stature, but it is also true that it rests largely with ourselves whether there shall be in us growth or shrinkage, enlargement or diminution. In *body*, in *mind*, in *character*, we have to determine this. Our habitual observance of the laws of health will ensure physical increase; mental culture—literally “taking thought”—will issue in intellectual advancement; and our *spiritual stature* depends on our wisdom or our folly. In regard to this last, it is of the most serious consequence that we practically observe the

conditions of growth. May we not say that they are these? (a) The possession of life. In order to grow one cubit—the smallest measure—we must *live*; and this spiritual life is in the Son of God (1 John v. 11). (b) The opening of our heart to the reception of all heavenly influences; more especially the direct communications of The Eternal Spirit. (c) Strenuous endeavour to follow Christ. (d) Earnest activity in the sacred field of Christian usefulness. Activity and growth are close companions.

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BRISTOL.

Luke vii. 16.

(Sixteenth Sunday after Trinity.)

“THEY GLORIFIED GOD, SAYING,
. . . . THAT GOD HATH VISITED
HIS PEOPLE.

THE outburst of popular surprise and joy which followed the miracle here recorded, took the form of these suggestive words. We are reminded of—

I.—THE FACT WHICH THEY OVERLOOK. There is a sense in which God cannot possibly “visit” any place or people. To visit, is to come to, to stay awhile, and to depart; or it is (in its derivative meaning) to render an inci-

dental service. He who is always everywhere, cannot come and go. He who is hourly, and even momentarily, blessing us with all His gifts, who is constantly “laying His hand upon us” for good, cannot do us a mere occasional good. “The goodness of God endureth continually.” (Ps. lii. 1.)

II.—THE IDEA WHICH THEY EXPRESS. This was the clear and undeniable fact that God had come near to them in the presence of One who was commissioned to work wonders of beneficent power. They who, in olden times, had manifested superhuman powers in the way of correction and punishment, came evidently from God, how much more He who wrought mightily to bless, to heal, to revive? The Jews did well to believe that, when the Son of Man restored the dead to life, the God of their fathers was visiting them with a special token of His presence, with an unusual manifestation of His power.

III.—THE TRUTH WHICH THEY SUGGEST, viz.: That God is never so near to us as when He *confers life* upon us. God “visits us,” He approaches us in peculiar kindness and special power; (1) When He adds a new human life to the world. We do not know, at the time, how much God is

blessing us. Who can tell what boundless capacities of good are folded in that little infant, what germ of genius looks out through those wondering eyes? Truly "no mother knows what she has in her cradle." (2) When He restores a life which is nearly lost in death, when He lays His arresting hand on the consuming fever, His reviving hand on the wasted and pulseless frame, when from uttermost prostration He leads back to fullness of recovered strength. (3) When He quickens a soul that has been dead in sin; then, assuredly, does His Spirit come near to us; then does He come into the very closest contact with our human nature, and "visits us indeed." (4) When He awakens a slumbering church to a renewal of spiritual life and energy.

God may visit us (*a*) of His own spontaneous, abounding goodness; (*b*) as the result of our holy life, and earnest, expectant prayer. It is well for "His people" when they have the seeing eye and responsive heart which will recognise His presence and own the touch of His uplifting hand.

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Mark xiii. 31.

(Seventeenth Sunday after Trinity.)

"HEAVEN AND EARTH SHALL PASS AWAY: BUT MY WORDS SHALL NOT PASS AWAY."

IF the hand of autumn writes any word on all the landscapes, that word is, "passing away." Yet we have an instinct, a heart-ache for what will "not pass away." Christ meets that, and meets it not only in Himself, but as He here says in His "words."

I.—CHRIST'S WORDS, AS A TEACHER, shall not pass away. No age can outlive them; no coming teacher supersede such utterances as, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you," &c., or "God is a Spirit," &c., "The Father seeketh such to worship Him." The octave of the Beatitudes gives imperishable music. The woes on sin will never be repealed, the benedictions on virtue never recalled. At the end of human history, when its last sage has uttered his richest wisdom, the verdict of humanity about Jesus will be, "Never man spake like this Man."

II.—CHRIST'S WORDS, AS A COMFORTER, will not pass away. There are words that might have suited the savage in some of his wild woes that would pass away in the progress of civilisation;

there might be conventional comfort suited to phases and forms of sorrow that depended upon country, class, or century. But Christ's consolations are for the deepest heart-wounds of our common humanity. They are for the perplexed, like Philip, the bereaved, like Martha and Mary, and the sinful, like Mary of Magdala. And such men and women are everywhere.

III.—CHRIST'S WORDS, AS A KING, will never pass away. How many royal proclamations are effete; how many enactments have been repealed. Bonaparte, Cæsar, even Solon were lawmakers for a district, and for a day. Our Lord's legislation is not affected by date or by boundaries of space. In all ages, and lands, and worlds His claims are just; His commandments good; His laws binding.

IV.—CHRIST'S WORDS, AS A SAVIOUR, will never pass away. This includes, but goes beyond, what we have said. But it goes beyond for it means (1) He ever liveth to intercede for us. (2) He ever says, "Come unto Me all that labour." He is exalted to be a Saviour.

EDITOR.

Luke i. 48.

(*Eighteenth Sunday after Trinity.*)

"FOR HE HATH REGARDED THE LOW ESTATE OF HIS HANDMAIDEN: FOR, BEHOLD, FROM HENCEFORTH, ALL GENERATIONS SHALL CALL ME BLESSED."

IN the Magnificat, the Virgin's heart broke out into a song of joy. Her idea of fame is that she shall be called "blessed." Some one has called it a true woman's true thought. It is certainly a true Christian's thought. Analyse it.

I.—A DESIRE FOR IMMORTALITY. Whether it is possible to be content with immortality of name and not of person, some may ask. The very desire for the former seems to be an unconscious cry for the latter. Not to be buried out of sight, out of thought, out of affection for evermore, is the instinctive longing of the human heart. Whether it be in the immortality of fame, or the truer and deeper immortality of soul, our nature cries, "Give me the glory of going on, and not to die."

II.—A DESIRE FOR USEFULNESS. The lofty thought of Mary's heart was not to be called beautiful, or rich, or great, or even wise, but blessed. She would be blessed in blessing others. This disinter-

estedness is the key-note of moral music, the foundation of moral strength, the lustre of moral virtue. Other aims will ever be subordinate in the Christian's heart, all other successes but failures if there be not success in this.

"All things do serve Thee, Lord,
All creatures, great and small;
Make use of me, of me, my God,
Though meanest of them all."

III.—A DESIRE FOR USEFULNESS THAT SHALL BE PERMANENT THOUGH INDIRECT. It was through her child Mary expected to be of such signal and such perennial blessing. And the truly Christian man thankfully believes that in widening circles, long after his earthly life has ended, his influence in healing and helping the world will tell. In authorship, in preaching, nay, in all good works, the hope of the earnest heart is that some reader, some hearer, some subject of his influence will be quickened to extend, and to hand down with multiplied force the truth it uttered. The vibrations for good will continue, and perchance swell into richer music long after the hand that first awakened them is powerless in the grave.

IV.—A DESIRE FOR USEFULNESS THAT IS ACHIEVED ONLY BY DIVINE INFLUENCE. It was God

who was about to make her a world-wide and a lasting blessing. Hence there was joy in Him; all was traced to Him, and the desire became sanctified, the hope heightened, even to consecration. The true Christian's thought is this, that his immortality, his usefulness, his all, are from God. God has magnified him.

EDITOR.

Ephesians iv. 26, 27.

(*Nineteenth Sunday after Trinity.*)

"BE YE ANGRY, AND SIN NOT : LET NOT THE SUN GO DOWN UPON YOUR WRATH : NEITHER GIVE PLACE TO THE DEVIL."

LORD BACON said, "To seek to extinguish anger utterly is but a bravery of the stoics; we have better oracles, 'Be ye angry, and sin not.'" These better oracles our text gives us; and they imply that there is an anger which is not sinful. Jesus Christ "looked round about with anger," yet He was sinless. Moreover His declaration, in the Sermon on the Mount, as to the man "who is angry with his brother *without a cause*," being guilty of evil, implies that anger with a cause may be excusable and even commendable. There is, however, an anger that is a crime against society, an

injury to the angry man himself, and a sin against Almighty God. We are led to consider from the teaching of our text—

I.—THAT ANGER IS SINFUL WHEN THE EXCITEMENT IS CONTINUED. When “the wrath,” which Alford calls “irritation,” Ellicott “the angered mood,” is prolonged, it develops either in peevishness, sulkiness, or hot revenge. These are sinful, it may be in differing degrees, yet all distinctly sinful. Aristotle reckons there are three kinds of anger, the hasty, the bitter, the implacable; that of these three the last is worst. As of old the curfew bell enjoined that all fires should, before midnight, be extinguished, so a moral curfew bell may well peal out the inspired strain, “Let not the sun go down on your wrath.”

II.—THAT ANGER IS SINFUL WHEN ITS INDULGENCE WORKS INJURY TO SELF OR TO OTHERS. Whenever there is a giving “place

to the devil,” harm is done. By evil anger room is given to the devils (*a*) of *madness*. The burning face, the quivering lip often tell of moral insanity, for reason has lost its balance under the stroke of passion. (*b*) Of *misery*. “Ashes fly back in the face of him who is furious,” says an old proverb, and these ashes are the sign of wretchedness. (*c*) Of *bitter speech*. Even when Moses waxed hot he spoke unadvisedly with his lips. (*d*) Of *slander*, which is the synonym of Satan, the chief devil. (*e*) Of *treachery*, the coward’s art; (*f*) Of *spitefulness*. “Thou shalt not bear any grudge,” is a more than Levitical command. All such anger is sin, and needs (1) *Pardon*. (2) *Conquest*. They who are conscious of temptation may well find a lodgment in their hearts for Robert Hall’s sincere, and repeated, and answered prayer, “O Lamb of God, keep me calm.”

EDITOR.

“Whenever, in the prayer for the Church militant, we commemorate the faithful dead, and thank God for all His servants departed this life in His faith and fear, we should remember with honest pride that we are thanking God for our own mothers and fathers, and for those that went before them; aye, for every honest God-fearing man and woman, high or low, who ever did their duty by God and their neighbours, and left, when they died, a spot of this land somewhat better than they found it.”—*Canon Kingsley*.

Breviaries.

Three Stages in Religious Life.

"ALL THE ENDS OF THE EARTH SHALL REMEMBER AND TURN UNTO THE LORD, AND ALL KINDREDS OF THE NATIONS SHALL WORSHIP BEFORE THEE."
—*Psalm xxii. 27.*

WHILST the psalmist is here primarily describing the nations as becoming godly, his description is equally true of every individual who becomes so. There must be each of these experiences, and, moreover, each of them in the order here set forth, in any soul that reaches the higher life. I.—REFLECTION. "Shall remember." We use the word reflection here because the usual Bible significance of the word "remember" is not simply "recollect," but meditate, consider. The act described is far more than one of memory; witness the words, "Remember now thy Creator." Here also the psalmist means "remember the Lord." Thought is the first stage in true life. Right thought on a right subject is essential to right life. "As a man thinketh in his heart so is he." (1) *Think about God.* (2) *Think what God's ways with men are.* (3) *Think of your relationship to God.* (a) *In the past,* (b) *now,* (c) *for the future.* II.—CONVERSION. "Turn unto," would be a synonym; or "return." "Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die?" "Turn us again, O God of Hosts, and we shall be saved." These passages, with that in our text, remind us (a) *man is turned away from God.* There is aversion and alienation. (b) *Man may be restored to God.* His face may yet look into the face of the Father, his life spent in Godward sympathies and activities. (c) *This conversion, i. e., moral turning round, implies human effort and Divine help.* Man is to turn, and God will turn him. Then, and then only, will his back be towards vanities and sins, and his face towards the true and the pure. More than passing sentiment is needed. There must be the putting forth of all the strongest forces of manhood, and the energising grace of God. III.—ADORATION; "shall worship." This is the climax. It is the fullest development of the higher life; the crown of human destiny. Adoration of God is (a) *the instinct,* (b) *the obligation,* (c) *the satisfaction* of souls

EDITOR.

The New Birth.

"JESUS ANSWERED AND SAID UNTO HIM, VERILY, VERILY, I SAY UNTO THEE, EXCEPT A MAN BE BORN AGAIN HE CANNOT SEE THE KINGDOM OF GOD."—*John* iii. 3.

FIGURES used by Christ most suitable ones, and always give best insight into truth. I.—A BIRTH IS A CALLING INTO ACTIVITY OF LATENT POWERS. (a) Prior to birth organs of sense there; organs, limbs, &c. Prior to regeneration, soul there and all faculties: perception, appreciation, judgment, capacity for enjoyment, love, hatred, &c. II.—CORRESPONDING WORLD EXISTS INDEPENDENTLY OF THE BIRTH. Prior to birth the outer world exists. So does the spiritual God's reign, love. Superlative glories of redemption. Birth means perfect child, and when developed perfect man. So birth spiritually means perfect babe in Christ, and when developed perfect man. Child may flourish or dwindle away. Depends on constitution and nutrition. III.—A BIRTH IS A DIVINE WORK. God, the author of life—all life—spiritual life.

T. C. E.

The True Vine.

"I AM THE TRUE VINE."—*John* xv. 1.

It is interesting to ask whether this figure was suggested to our Lord by some vine on which His eye rested on His way to Gethsemane, or whether, being still in the upper room, He was looking at the vine frequently trained about the window of the great chamber, or was gazing at the cup in which the juice of that fruit of the vine was held. All such were shadows—He was *The True Vine*. Whatever suggested the use of the figure here to Him as an emblem of Himself, His use of it suggests to us at least four thoughts concerning Himself, His life, His mission. I.—UNIVERSALITY. As the vine finds a place in the narrative of Noah, and the poems of Homer, was known to ancients and moderns almost all the world over, so Jesus has relations to the race that are not local or temporary, but universal and permanent. He belongs to humanity, He is

"the Son of Man." II.—BEAUTY. In its full cultivation, and when the purple clusters hang among the bright leaves, the vine is royal among fruit trees. Regarding Christ we are impelled to use the exclamation of Scripture, "How great is His beauty." For we note (1) *All beauty of the physical creation are but types of moral excellencies.* It is the purity of the lily, the serenity of the star, the stability of the mountain—each a moral quality—that is their charm to the observing eye. (2) *All moral excellencies are but faint hints of Christ's character.* As all that is best in all material nature together, only indicates what is noblest in humanity, so all that is noblest in all humanity only indicates what is to be found in Jesus Christ. III.—FRUITFULNESS. Among fruit-bearing trees none are more famous for lavish affluence than the vine. Directly we begin to explore (1) *the character,* (2) *the teachings,* (3) *the life,* (4) *the works,* (5) *the world-wide influence* of our Lord, we are laden, as the men who brought the clusters of Eshcol were, with an untold wealth of fruit. IV.—GLADNESS. The vintage has ever, and everywhere, been associated with mirth, with festivity. The wine is a symbol of joy. Angels, predicting Christ, said they were "bringing good tidings of joy," and Jesus Himself said He sought that men's joy might be full, and His joy in them remain.

EDITOR.

Assurance of Salvation.

"MINE EYES HAVE SEEN THY SALVATION."—*Luke* ii. 30.

SIMEON, as is said to be true of the swan, sung his noblest song just before his death. This is one chord of it. Does it not remind us, I.—THAT THE GREAT AIM OF JESUS CHRIST IS TO BRING SALVATION? The infant Saviour, now lying in the devout old man's arms, was recognised by him as bringing not simply mental light, or national renewal, or even spiritual comfort, but "salvation." The angelic music told of the birth of "a Saviour," Mary's voice sang of "a Saviour," and now Simeon sings of "salvation." Christ brings salvation from sin as a ruling principle, as a terrific power, and as entailing an awful penalty. II.—THIS SALVATION CAN BE CLEARLY REALISED. Not dreamed of, talked about, expected, or hoped for, but "seen." Its purpose "seen," its method "seen," its result "seen." III.—THIS SALVATION SHOULD BE REALISED IN ITS PERSONAL RELATION. (1) As saving the individual—"mine eyes." (2) As wrought by God—"Thy salvation." IV.—THIS CLEAR CONSCIOUSNESS PREPARES FOR DEATH. He who can make these words his own can sing "*Nunc Dimittis.*"

EDITOR.

Pulpit Handmaids.

PITH OF GREAT SERMONS BY GREAT PREACHERS.

Sermon by the late Dr. WINTER HAMILTON.

Analysis by the Rev. T. B. KNIGHT.

The Transcendent Love of Christ.

“AND TO KNOW THE LOVE OF CHRIST, WHICH PASSETH KNOWLEDGE.”—*Ephesians* iii. 19.

(*a*) The text is a kind of *hyperbole* which does not mislead, but, like irony, limits and corrects itself; (*b*) it is also a *definition*, one of the most exact; for the writer having asserted what might be misunderstood subjoins an explanatory member to the sentence, thus giving it more clearness and decision; and (*c*) by pronouncing the love of Christ as that “which passeth knowledge,” it indirectly *asserts the essential Divinity* of our Lord; for such a lofty style could not be justly employed in speaking of a merely human being.

I.—THE REPRESENTATION OF CHRIST’S LOVE MADE IN THE TEXT, Consider: “passeth knowledge.” One thing is plain, that love cannot pass knowledge, the motive of which may be conceived. If we can enter into the motive, all its best and largest consequences may be understood. The incomprehensible degree of our Lord’s love to man must be in its infinitive motive.

1. *The nature of this love.* It is *Divine*, most strictly so, since it comes from the very bosom of God; and may be shown to be Divine:—

i. *By comparing the love of the creature with that of the Creator.* The benevolence of men to their fellows must be (*a*) regulated by the standard of self-love, for it is impossible for any being to love another better than himself; and (*b*) dependent or

self-controlled. To employ such words as "passing knowledge," of the compassion of any creature, be he angel or man, would be "fanciful conceit or turgid verbiage. . . . The fathomless streamlet, the overpowering splendour of the glow-worm, the cloud-capt elevation of the mole-hill." The love of Christ, on the other hand, is infinite and uncontrolled; for (c) Divine claims are made by and for Him as creation, sustentation, universal possession, scripture inspiration, the pardon of sins, the attributes of omniscience, omnipresence, omnipotence, self-existence, and eternity; and as Jehovah is to be beloved, obeyed, trusted, and adored, so is Christ. And (d) The Deity of Christ is associated in the sacred writings with displays of His love, "The Prince of peace," "God *with us*," "The Lord *our righteousness*," "Our Saviour," &c., &c.

ii. *By proving that all the Divine perfections must direct and enforce it.* It was—

(a) *Absolute.* The highest angel has no property in himself. He leans on infinite power, and is bound to infinite authority. The love of Christ is above these conditions. In one sense, indeed, He was the gift of God by voluntary condescension and official subordination, but He was His own in irresponsible authority and self-detering action—"Who gave Himself," "The sacrifice of Himself," "Offered up Himself," &c. It was in the tone of sovereignty he said, "Lo, I come," "For this cause came I unto this world," &c. "The fire of love fell not kindling upon His heart, it was native to it." But that which is independent is underived; we therefore regard this love as—

(b) *Eternal.* There was never a moment or event which this love did not anticipate. The eternal purpose "was purposed in Christ."

(c) *Infinitely intelligent.* If the plainest methods of husbandry are stated in Scripture to "proceed from the Lord of Hosts" (Is. xxxviii. 29), we may reasonably conclude that our salvation will be conspicuous for features of wonderful contrivance. "In Him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." This love is also—

(d) *Necessarily efficient.* Christ herein has travailed in the

greatness of His strength. But this strength must not be confined to the simple idea of power, it is moral right—"He hath power to forgive sins." "Able to save to the uttermost." "The tribute will be just, as the shouts will be loud which shall proclaim over the salvation of the Church, the energy of the love which has redeemed it." But further, this love must be consistent with—

(e) *Immaculately pure.* Christ is the holy and just one. Holiness was the standard of His grace, and grace was the expression of His holiness. But, being Divine, this love must be—

(f) *Immutable.* "He loved them to the end," "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" Again, it is necessarily—

(g) *Authoritative.* In the love of our Saviour there is not only a Divine greatness, but a Divine dispensation. It is that which administers and applies—"The Saviour of the body of the Church," "Looking for the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." It is only then, as this love is that of God, that it "passeth knowledge." "Let our capacities incessantly widen, still it cannot, in their most inconceivable sublimity, be contained by them;" unless the smaller circle can receive the larger, or the creature "find out the Almighty to perfection."

2. *The object of Christ's love.* Life has sometimes been sacrificed by man for man, prompted by natural affection, by moral esteem, or religious charity; but He came to save—

i. *Man, labouring under the demerit of sin,* "A seed of evil-doers." Sin has *repellent* qualities, "The abominable thing that God hateth." It closes heaven, alienates from the fair and good, exiles from holy sympathies, and from it the soul of Christ must be infinitely estranged. To save—

ii. *Man, unsolicitous of Divine love.* The guilty parents of the race are not described suing for readmission into God's favour—they flee. It was not complacency which always regards excellence, it was not relenting which always supposes contrition, it was grace.

3. *The means by which the love of Christ manifested itself.* We are not here invited to review some simply uncostly exercise of natural benevolence, but to estimate a tremendous expense of condescension, debasement, and suffering. The fact of—

i. *His incarnation* proves that "His love passeth knowledge." He was "made flesh, and dwelt among us."

ii. *His death* makes it impressively manifest. The incarnation was adopted as a necessary preliminary to ulterior measures—"The body is prepared" for "an offering," "Made lower than the angels for the suffering of death." Behold Him in Gethsemane! on Calvary! Why is this? Sin was the occasion of all—"He was cut off, not for himself," "He bore our iniquities."

To calculate this love, which exceeds all calculation, the following *inquiries* must be originated. (a) May His death be considered *a strictly personal act*? "God was manifest in the flesh." "In every available sense, and according to every practical influence, we believe 'the decease accomplished' by Christ Jesus to possess all the *concurrence* which a personal act requires, and all the value which the combined extreme of His properties can impart." (b) How were His sufferings affected by this contrast of natures? The manhood was perfect in its rectitude and purity. It was assumed for the purpose of "finishing transgression and making an end of sin." In constitution and motive it was, therefore, a holy thing. Inconceivably hateful then must sin have been to its views and sensibilities.

iv. *The blessings which Christ's love secures.* All descriptions of salvation are unattempted in the Bible. It tells how "God so loved the world." All that is sinful in our nature the gospel of salvation perceives and counteracts, in order to save the SOUL from death, and to confer bestowments of which Heaven is but the name, and eternity but the prolongation.

"O, unexampled love !

Love nowhere to be found—*Less than Divine.*"—MILTON.

II.—THE PERCEPTION OF CHRIST'S LOVE AFFIRMED IN THE TEXT TO BE POSSIBLE. The Scriptures declare (a) that all just estimation of Christ and His work is to be traced to a supernatural source. "No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost." (b) That such superhuman information is pre-eminently valuable. "This is life eternal," &c. (c) That this knowledge is distinctive of the genuine believer. "Ye *know* the

grace of our Lord Jesus Christ." We therefore inquire into the practical use of this internal perception of Christ's love. It is

i. *The great interpreting principle which the Christian applies to all the tremendous facts of redemption.* What a contrast to all that eye hath seen, or ear heard, &c. Its mysteries are and can only be the absolute suggestions of revelation. "God hath revealed these things unto us by His Spirit." The Christian feels that all is marvellous, perplexing, incredible, but for one solution. "To know the love of Christ" is to possess the reply. It is further—

ii. *The sacred element and incentive of all piety.* When the love is appropriated, its possessor becomes a new creature, for the Christian is united to Christ, vitally as well as mystically, and as an effect of this union our Lord's love becomes—

(1) *The theme of contemplation.* The soul receives it into its most honoured recesses, and lays it up among its most treasured delights. "Glorified in His saints, and admired in all them who believe." It is also—

(2) *The ground of confidence.* He has no confidence in the flesh, is not ashamed, for he knows in whom he has believed. It is likewise—

(3) *The motive of obedience.* "Hereby do we know that we know Him if we keep His commandments." To the believer Christ's love is—

iii. *The impulse and model of all benevolence and zeal.* "Herein is our love made perfect, because as He is, so are we in this world." Our delight and our business is to "make manifest the savour of His knowledge in every place." The men who made Christ's example their study, and His love their zeal, "were not to be likened to the lens which can kindle a distant flame by the sunbeam transmitted through it, while its own surface continues dark and cold, but rather to the flower and tree, which first, themselves, imbibing the heavenly ray, return it in bloom, and odour of fruit." *Certain conclusions*, arising from the investigation of the text, must be named—

1. *It is only natural to expect a transcendent character in Christianity.* "That," said the Saviour, "ye may marvel."

There are men who cannot make Christianity sufficiently insignificant and mean. "They have succeeded in extracting from Christianity a creed without doctrine, a code without sanction, a morality without principle, a hope without solace."

2. Right views of the person and work of Christ is the best test of genuine religion. (a) The *Scripture labours to exalt*, in this connection, all our sentiments of confidence, regard, and adoration. If we err, we err with the only directory of truth. (b) Men who believe this doctrine of Christ's Divinity have their thoughts and feelings led up one ever ascending scale, until they lose themselves in the Divine and infinite. (c) Those who give to Christ another rank, give to His religion another construction, and should well consider the temerity of thus counteracting the temper and language of the Inspired Book.

3. *There is much of implicit, as well as declarative, evidence in support of the Saviour's supreme Divinity.* In perusing any treatise there are two methods of ascertaining its purport: (a) The more *direct*, there is "line upon line"—"He was God." (b) The *inferential*. We hesitate not to affirm that the one truth, "In Christ Jesus dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily," is the master-key of Divine revelation. And thus, what is most distinctly announced, is most virtually implied.

4. *Necessity is laid upon Christians to live habitually under the influence of this transcendent love.* The early Christians felt no sacrifices too dear when the love "which passeth knowledge" demanded a return. When crucifixion was the penalty of their fidelity their joy knew no bounds, since it elevated them to the "fellowship of the Saviour's sufferings, and a conformity to His death." "It doth not yet appear what we shall be," yet nothing can now repress our desire and preclude our right to sing the strain the celestial choir celebrate, and by which we "shall be still praising" Him. "Unto Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever."—Amen.

T. BROUGHTON KNIGHT.

SERMON-MAKING.

AFTER all the two periods of twenty minutes or half an hour on Sundays spent in preaching go much further than he sometimes thinks to determine the pastor's success and influence in his parish. The work done in these two periods, however short they may be, should represent seasons of uninterrupted careful pains. If he muddles away the whole week in a kindly intermittent discharge of the lesser duties of his post the chances are that his sermons will be muddled too; and, especially in a town district, the result will be seen in the number and attentiveness of his congregation. It is true that there are churches in "respectable" neighbourhoods where the seats will always be fairly filled, however slight and dry the weekly provender supplied there; and there are others, with perhaps a solitary jangling bell, so surrounded by repellent social atmosphere and, through stress of poverty, so meanly equipped within, as to deter worshippers, let the parson be ever so painstaking. But, as a rule, the attendance of the people at Divine service is regulated by the preaching they hear. It is the fashion for some to say that the sacred message delivered is, or should be, unaffected by the language in which it is clothed. This is nonsense.

The preacher can hardly give too much pains to the preparation of his sermons. Let him dismiss from his mind the canting temptation to imagine that he renders himself liable to the charge of egotism if he makes much of the business in which he is the sole actor, or that sacred influences, timed to fit his presence in the pulpit, will—if he is earnest in the main—save him the necessity of previous human trouble. Let him rather encourage the thought that when he preaches the interest and influence of his sermon depend upon the serious and honest pains he has taken in its preparation. A gardener who wants a good crop is not content with reliance on the beneficent aid of nature. He chooses the best seed he can get. He takes the utmost care to see that it is sown under the most promising conditions. He feels that his personal credit is at stake in the matter, and that blame for failure cannot be altogether thrown upon the weather

and the soil. And, in like manner, the preacher who desires his seed to grow and bring forth well will neglect nothing which is likely to make it wholesomely acceptable. And he cannot do this in a hurry. He cannot do it when he has allowed his power of application to be frittered away by a multitude of petty interruptions. He must sit down to his work, whether he preaches what is called "extempore" or not, with a reserve of force. He must have a good head of steam in his boiler, which is hardly possible if he has been whistling and shunting himself about in sidings all day. Look at an engine waiting to drag a train. See how it glows and bubbles with suppressed energy as it stands ready in the shed.

We may be sure that the preacher will acquit himself best, and make the best impression upon his people, who deliberately assists the accumulation of his power before he settles himself down to the preparation of his sermon, and who dares to resent the pressure of other less important business that he may seat himself at his desk with a clear head and a warm interest in the work to be done. He never approaches that work without secret prayer; but he locks his door, and he does his utmost to put his message into a shape most likely to invite healthy attention and leave a wholesome result. Whether he preaches with or without book he uses his pen. He arranges his subject, he chooses his words with care, and patiently reconstructs clumsy or dull sentences, until he feels that, according to his abilities, he has created a fresh and original fabric. He will then go into his pulpit with the encouraging reflection that he has something to say, and that he is prepared to say it in the best way within his power. And I would ask whether a higher influence is not then most likely to accompany his work.—*Public Opinion.*

"Liberty of speech, like liberty of action, may be claimed by each to the fullest extent compatible with the equal rights of all. Exceeding the limits thus arising, it becomes immoral. Within them, no restraint of it is permissible."—*Herbert Spencer.*

Selected Acorns from a Stalwart Oak.

GEORGE MACDONALD.

“The smallest living *acorn* is fit to be the parent of *oak-trees* without end.”—*Carlyle*.

THEORY AND PRACTICE IN RELIGION.—“The religion of the two, father and son, was obedience and prayer; *their theories only the print of their spiritual feet* as they walked homeward.”

LOVE AND NEARNESS TO CHRIST.—“If love be religion what matter whether its object be in heaven or on the earth. *Love itself is the only nearness*. He who thinks of his Saviour as far away can have made little progress in the need of Him.”

POSSIBILITIES OF THE DIVINE LIFE.—“An immortal woman she was for she had set out *to grow for evermore*. For such, neither poet nor prophet, none save him who knows what he is making of her, is capable of predicting an adequate future.”

THE IDOLATRY OF FORMALISM.—“The love of Jerusalem became an idolatry, for the Jews no longer loved it because the living God dwelt therein, but because the glory of it was theirs; then *it was doomed, for it was an idol*.”

DISTRUST THE DESTROYER OF ETERNITY.—“He that would always know before he trusts, who would have from his God a promise before he will expect, is the slayer of his own eternity.”

THE VICTORY OF FAITH.—“To trust in spite of the look of being forgotten, to keep crying out into the vast whence comes no voice and where seems no hearing, and yet believe that God is awake and utterly loving, . . . such is the victory that overcometh the world.”

THE FRUITFULNESS OF HOPE.—“No good hope dies without leaving its child, a younger and fresher hope, behind it. The year's fruit must fall that the year's fruit may come, and the winter itself is the king's highway to the spring.”

Correspondence Page.

[*Enquiries or Answers will be inserted here concerning Books, or about Texts suitable for Special Occasions, or as to Sermons on given Verses or Topics. Brief letters on any matter that pertains to the work of the Gospel Preacher or Student will also be welcomed.*]

ANSWERS.

THE REVISED VERSION OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

Replying to *Students* in our last number, we are informed that the date of the appearance of the R. V. is not yet fixed and cannot be near, inasmuch as on the eighth of last month the Revisers closed their 79th Session, and carried their final review only as far as the end of the 26th chapter of Exodus.

EDITOR.

THE BLUE RIBBON ARMY.

R. T. must be content if we say that it is impossible to tabulate the results of any moral movement. Specially is it difficult to give statistics in this case where there is no one organisation, but in almost every town and village in England there is a Blue Ribbon Army of its own. Probably the account just issued from one head-quarters, in London, to the following effect, may be taken as a specimen:—"The number of pledges gained during twelve months is 680,000, and among former adherents only one in ten had broken the pledge. One hundred and twenty workers report 30,000 supporters gained by their instrumentality."

EDITOR.

QUESTIONS.

EDITION OF JOHN WESLEY'S WORKS.

Will some reader of the *The Homilist* kindly inform me what is the best small edition of John Wesley's Sermons?

PRESBYTER.

HYMNS AND ORGANS IN WORSHIP.

Would some Scotch reader supply us kindly with the name of the book, or treatise, or pamphlet that puts most fully and fairly the argument against Hymns and Organs in Public Worship?

TRAVELLER.

QUESTIONS IN OUR LAST.

Answers to those not already replied to will be greatly valued by many readers, and by

EDITOR.

Reviews.

THE THEORY OF INSPIRATION, or Why Men do not believe the Bible. By the Rev. J. M. WILSON, M.A., F.R.A.S., F.G.S., Head Master of Clifton College, and Chaplain to the Lord Bishop of Exeter. Published under the direction of the Trust Committee. London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, Charing Cross.

Mr. Wilson's two lectures before us are veined throughout with his conviction, "that it is the misrepresentations of the essential nature of Christianity which seriously diminish its influence, and especially among the thoughtful." This conviction leads him to a treatment of the topic of these lectures in a method that is unusual, and that has at once its advantages and disadvantages. Anxious to brush away notions of inspiration which repel men by their manifest falsity to reason, to fact, he is scarcely as successful in clearly indicating what he considers to be the true view. From beginning to end, however, there is not an unfair sentence, an ungenerous word. The scholar, the man, the Christian, is heard in his every tone. He, himself, manifests what he enjoins on his hearers and readers in a fine sentence quoted from James Hinton, "I find the Bible the secret of all truth; all I truly know I derive from it; and yet I would say to every man, 'Don't believe the Bible if you cannot see clearly that it is true. Deal freely, boldly by it. Don't be afraid. 'Tis a friend, not an enemy. If you don't treat it straightforwardly it cannot do its service to you.'"

METACOSMOS, A Study in Bishop Butler's Writings. London: John Snow and Co., Paternoster Row.

He is a brave man who enters the lists with Bishop Butler. This the author of this brochure clearly is. But whether he is as capable as he is courageous is open to question. He appears to have equally misunderstood St. Paul and Bishop Butler. He takes from the writings of each, sentences apart from their contexts, and, after putting his own construction upon these isolated passages, proceeds to demolish their assumed meaning with much show of nineteenth century superiority. As far as the "Analogy" and "Dissertations" are concerned, Butler's argument, as every careful student knows,

is merely negative. He makes no attempt to demonstrate the truth of Christianity ; what he does is to show that, arguing from the premises of a Deist, the antecedent probability is not against, but rather in favour of Christianity. Therefore it is manifestly unfair to talk of Butler's scheme of religion. And in the particular argument cited by the author of this pamphlet, Butler's object is to show that, as in this world, vice is in the long run, and sometimes immediately, punished, and virtue rewarded by the action of natural law ; it is, surely, not unreasonable to suppose that in future life, under the government of the same God, whose servant nature is, there will be in a like way, though probably in a higher degree, the dealing out to each man of his deserts ; "the tendencies of vice and virtue being essential, and founded in the nature of things." In respect of St. Paul our author is as open to the charge of misconstruction as concerning Butler. For the apostle nowhere teaches the sort of forensic justification with which he is credited ; while the assertion that "love," as Paul conceives it, will "be swept away," because there is "no room for faith when we know God's aim," is utterly unphilosophic, for in the deepest sense the finite can never "know" the Infinite, but must always sustain to Him a relationship that involves faith.

MANLY PIETY ; A BOOK FOR YOUNG MEN. By ROBERT PHILIP, D.D.
New and Revised Edition. London : William P. Nimmo & Co.

The late Dr. Philip, the Author of this book, was one of the ablest nonconformist ministers of this century. He was a thinker, vigorous, independent, and devout. His works, entitled "Experimental Guides," and his book on the "Eternal," which were noticed in *The Homilist* a few years ago, have obtained a wide circulation. We knew him well ; and in the youthhood of our ministry formed a very high estimate of his character and ability as a minister of Christ. How quietly and unostentatiously he pursued his way ! In his pulpit there were none of the vulgar roarings, hootings, and claptraps that characterise many of our modern pulpiteers. He moved on the old orthodox lines of thought, almost, we think, too rigorously, yet always with stately majesty and manly catholicity. This has been considered the most useful of his many useful works. The very titles of the numerous chapters here are striking and significant,—“Manly Estimates of Both Worlds, Manly Estimates of True Wisdom, Manly Faith in Providence, Manly Views of Divine Influence, Manly Views of Religious Mystery, Manly Views of Divine Holiness, Manly Avowals of Immortal Hopes, Manly Views of Faith,

Manly Estimates of Self-Consecration, Manly Estimates of the Evil of Sin, Manly Estimates of the Atonement, Manly Estimates of Preaching, Manly Estimates of Devotion, Manly Realisation of Invisible Things, Manly Estimates of Church Fellowship, Manly Estimates of Divine Revelation, Solomon, the Royal Preacher."

CRUMBS FROM THE MASTER'S TABLE. By A GATHERER.. London : S. W. Partridge, 9, Paternoster Row.

This little book is unpretentious,—intended for "teachers and occasional preachers," and has many explanations and suggestions that cannot fail to be useful. But we really do not like such a title as "*Crumbs from the Master's Table*;" it reminds us of the titles of the sermons of some of the old divines such as "Crumbs of Comfort for the Chickens of Grace," "The Snuffers of Divine Love," "The Spiritual Mustard Pot to make the Believer Sneeze with Devotion," "Some Fine Biscuits Baked in the Oven of Charity, carefully Conserved for the Chickens of the Church and the Sparrows of Salvation."

ILLUSTRATIONS AND MEDITATIONS, OR FLOWERS FROM A PURITAN'S GARDEN. DISTILLED AND DISPENSED by C. H. SPURGEON, London. Passmore and Alabaster, Paternoster Buildings.

It is easy work to compile a book of this kind. Some of the old Puritanic writers such as Sibbes, Lord Bacon's pastor, quaint old Fuller, Henry Smith, Thomas Manton, &c., were giants in their way. Manton so constantly said good things that we prefer to read the whole of his works rather than extracts from them or remarks upon them. We cannot make the rose more beautiful by our touch, or more fragrant by any aromas we may bring to it.

THE GOSPEL OF ST. MARK. BY T. M. LINDSAY, D.D. London : Blackie and Son, 49 and 50, Old Bailey.

The following extract from the preface will explain the nature and purport of this book :—"This little book has been written to supply what has been felt by many to be a pressing want, a short commentary

on a portion of Scripture cheap enough to be bought by every member of a Bible Class. It is not meant to be a new and original exposition of St. Mark's gospel, and free use has been made, always with due acknowledgment it is hoped, of every available source of information. The introduction, analysis, and divisions of the commentary have been made with the view of enabling teachers and others to treat the gospel as a Life of Christ; and in the arrangement Mr. Andrews' harmony of the Gospels, contained in his 'Bible Student's Life of our Lord,' has been used, the writer believing it to be, after long study and comparison with others, upon the whole, the best yet published. Readers will find that Mr. Andrews' arrangement has been departed from on two occasions only." Suffice it to say that this is one of the most useful of the very useful series of works published by Messrs. Blackie and Son.

THE DIVINE IDEAL OF THE CHURCH. By an ELDER. London: Elliot Stock, Paternoster row.

This little book, while it contains some stupid things, may be read with interest, and, perhaps, with profit by some elders. A Church is an *assembly of Christly lives*. But where is there such an assembly to be found?

UNIVERSALISM: a Lecture by T. M. MACDONALD, M.A. London: Hatchards, Piccadilly.

We are told that "this Lecture was given, in substance, as one of the Lent Lectures, in St. Michael's Church, Blackheath. It is published in compliance with the request of some who heard it, in the hope that, by God's blessing, it may be helpful to some amongst the many whose minds are now exercised with doubts on the subject of future punishments." The three questions discussed in this lecture are, "Whether is reason or revelation to be consulted as a final authority?" "What is the true motives of reason instructed by experience?" "What is the plain teaching of Holy Scripture as to the future state of those who have finally rejected God's offer of mercy in the Gospel?" The author is neither an annihilationist nor a universalist, and he gives the reasons for his views with modesty and candour.



Leading Homily.

HARVEST THOUGHTS.

"THOU SHALT KEEP THE FEAST OF INGATHERING, WHICH IS IN THE END OF THE YEAR, WHEN THOU HAST GATHERED IN THY LABOURS OUT OF THE FIELD."—*Exodus* xxiii. 16.

IT is an almost universal sentiment that the season of harvest ought not to be passed over thoughtlessly and without devout reflection. Among the Greeks and Romans the ingathering of the fruits of the earth was celebrated with religious observances in the field and the temple. And it has always been felt that harvest, with its swift activity, its groups of merry reapers, its fresh store of food for man and beast, its reward of the husbandman's labour and patience, is both a picturesque scene and a time full of lessons for human life.

The Bible is full of references to corn-fields and harvest-time. The Bible is a book for all; but as regards its parables and imagery it is chiefly the book of those who plough and reap and gather into barns, of those who live a simple life among hills and fields, and are familiar with the sights and sounds of the country. Moses was a shepherd, so, too, was David. They were the leaders of flocks before they became leaders of men. Some of the prophets came forth from a pastoral and agricultural life. It

was amidst vineyards and orchards and fields that they thought out their burning words of righteousness, and caught their holy inspirations, and were schooled for their great work. The Hebrews, too, as a people, were mainly husbandmen and shepherds. Thus the Bible naturally abounds with pictures of the sights and seasons and occupations of country life, and with parables and illustrations drawn from country life. The beautiful story of Ruth is a harvest story. Many of the Psalms are harvest Psalms. It is said, "The people joy before the Lord, according to the joy in harvest": "O Judah, I have set a harvest for thee, when I returned the captivity of My people."

But more than this. Among the Hebrews there were three great yearly feasts, one for each of the three chief seasons of the year. One was the Passover, held in spring: another was Pentecost, the feast of the first-fruits, held in summer: another was the Feast of Tabernacles, held in autumn. This was partly a Harvest Home Festival. The fruits of the field and orchard had been gathered; the labour of the year had been rewarded; the toil and strain of tilling and tending the vines and crops had once more ended; pause and quietness fell over all, welcomed by all. The temporary booths or arbours, in which the people lodged for the seven days of the Feast, were decorated with boughs of the choicest trees, and were made beautiful with foliage and fruit. And while the people commemorated a great event of their national history—their sojourn in the desert, the time when they abode in tents—they also celebrated their Harvest Home. Once more the corn had ripened in the bright sunshine, and the reapers had gone forth into the fields, followed by the trains of lowly, grateful gleaners, and the precious sheaves had been bound up and brought home with rejoicing. Heaven had again smiled upon the husbandman and his work, and with joy and thankfulness he celebrated the goodness of God. So when we think of harvest-time, and try to find some of the lessons it suggests, we are in harmony with the spirit of the Bible, and with the general sentiment of men in all ages.

I.—One lesson is, THE PERSEVERANCE OF NATURE IN DOING ITS WORK. The sowers go forth scattering the seed into the bosom

of the earth, and there it lies sheltered and preserved. In silence, amid the snow and frost and fierce blasts of winter, Nature is doing its wonderful work of starting into growth the seed that has been sown. Spring comes with its warmer days and clearer skies, and through the yielding soil the green blade finds its way, the cheering promise of the coming harvest. Months pass on, March with its keen, biting gusts; April with its sudden changes of cloud and sunshine; May with its strange intermingling of wintry cold and summer heat—and through all, the corn quietly and steadily grows stronger and higher, until at last it bends its yellow head, and sways and rustles in the passing breeze, and groups of men and women go forth to cut down and gather the rich, precious grain.

There is a quiet steadfastness in nature by which it works on amidst hindrances and difficulties, producing life and beauty and fruitfulness. It does not rest content with failure and defeat, but ever out of disaster achieves some gain and compensation. It is never idle, but ever gives some harvest to the man who ploughs and sows. With much patience and faithfulness and perseverance, nature multiplies and ripens that which man gives into its keeping, and year after year unfolds before his eyes some recompense for his labour. It should be so in human life. We are God's husbandry. By many ways God is giving to man the seeds of goodness and usefulness, which it is his duty and blessedness to start into growth and bring to ripeness. There are wise lessons, and righteous principles, and worthy examples, and Divine inspirations, and rich opportunities, which are given to a man—as the seed is cast by the sower into the soil—and it is his life-work to cherish these and develope them, and make them fruitful in his character and daily life. And in this work the voice of nature says—Persevere! Let there be a golden harvest for God and your fellow man to gather! Do not be disheartened by the storms that sweep over you, nor by the days of wintry cold and dreariness! Be resolute! Bring forth fruit according to your opportunities! Learn to repair the broken places, and out of failure to win success! Persevere; do thy work where the Great Husbandman has placed thee!

II.—IN HUMAN LIFE THERE IS A PERIOD CORRESPONDING TO HARVEST TIME. It is not merely a pretty fancy that sees in the seasons of the year an analogy to the course of human life. There is a period of life corresponding to spring, and another corresponding to summer, and another corresponding to autumn, and another corresponding to winter. This is an old thought, which has been bound up with the poetry and reflection of every age. Childhood, youth, manhood, old age, are the four seasons of the human year: the sowing time, the ripening time, the reaping time, and the time of rest and anticipation of the future. When a man has reached, what may be called, the autumn of human life, there should be fruitfulness, something achieved and realised. The man whose gifts and culture fit him for art, should have given something of beauty to the world: some picture or sculpture that shall add to the world's treasures of art. The man whose calling lies in the sphere of statesmanship, should have got some legislative work done by which his fellow men shall be helped. The man whose talents and training qualify him for preaching, or for literature, or for science, or for commerce, should have accomplished something: there should be a harvest of wise, true work, by which the world is enriched and blessed. It is sad to see a man standing in this world, with God above and the grave beneath, and opportunities for work and usefulness around him, and the days beginning to shorten, and the leaves beginning to wither and fall, and the autumn chill beginning to be felt in the air, and no faithful, lasting work done.

So, too, there should be a harvest of goodness in the character. "The fruits of the Spirit are love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, self-control." These should have been developed and ripened, so that when the year of life is beginning to wane, there may be a fulness of moral beauty and Christian goodness.

III.—HARVEST IS A REVELATION OF GOD. The ancient Hebrew mind saw in the various laws and processes of nature the presence and work of God. Flocks and herds, and cedars of Lebanon, and vineyards, and olive groves, and valleys covered

with corn, all were from God. Nature was not self acting, moving onwards in its seasons, and growth, and phenomena, without a living will and spirit through all and in all. It was one vast and glorious manifestation of The Eternal. The thunder was His voice: the earthquake was His tread: the lightning was His fire: the clouds were His chariot: the stars were His flock, which He called by names: He touched the mountains and they trembled: He made the light and formed the darkness: the storm was His anger, and the calm was His smile.

And this wondrous world with its oceans and mountains and forests, and heat and cold, and countless forms of life and beauty, is, to the devout mind, solemn, sacred, full of God, the temple of the Almighty. In all that we behold there is the Spirit of God. He comes near to us in nature, filling us with awe, or with joy, or with trust, or with a sense of our own littleness, or with a sense of mystery.

What does harvest teach us of God, and how should it influence us? It reveals the *Faithfulness of God*. Year after year there is a new store of food. The empty garners are replenished. Seed-time and harvest follow each other in unbroken succession. Men look forward in confidence to the time of harvest, and break up the ground and sow the seed in hope, nor is their preparation in vain. Autumn comes, and with it there is the ingathering of fruits, witnessing to the loving faithfulness of God.

So, too, harvest manifests the *Power of God*. The few grains are, by the mysterious chemistry of nature, multiplied thirty-fold, or sixty-fold, or it may be a hundred-fold. Man scatters a little, God makes it much. Every year there is a new act of creation to feed the human family. In silence, and by a process too subtle and mysterious for man to discover, the wonderful work of increase is wrought. The fields of golden corn on its slender stems, bending to the summer wind or rejoicing in the bright sunshine, whispers to us of the Power of God.

The harvest also shews us something of the *Fatherly discipline of God*. Is the promise of spring always fully realised? Is there no part of it that comes to nothing? There are fields where the early promise is great, and yet in the autumn it is found that the

grain is poor and scant. Only a part of the time and toil that has been spent in ploughing and sowing and weeding is rewarded, and only a part of the aspiration of spring is brought to an end and made into a reality. Rain and storm, blight and mildew, cold and cankerworm, do their destructive work. What is the spiritual good of this disappointment and loss? It teaches us that there is a higher will than man's; that a man cannot boast of to-morrow, for he knows not what a day may bring forth. It is a school for patience and resignation, and the triumph of trust in God over adverse circumstances.

As the world in which we live is one of the books of God, so harvest is a page in that book, where we can trace His providence and power and His wise care for the higher life of the soul.

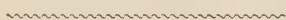
IV.—THE PRINCIPLE OF HARVEST IS THE PRINCIPLE OF CHARACTER. "Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap"; *that*, not something else. He that soweth wheat shall reap wheat—not some other grain: and he that soweth tares shall gather tares—not a better kind of harvest. It is so in human character. He that soweth goodness shall reap goodness, and he that soweth evil shall reap evil. Anger, selfishness, pride, ambition, idleness—if a man yield to these things, it is the solemn law of retribution that they will grow in him and rush toward noxious blossom and fruit. There will be a harvest, and a fearful reaping it will be. He who has sown avarice will have to reap avarice; he will sink deeper and deeper into the slough of selfishness: he who has sown animalism, or worldliness, or falsehood, will reap accordingly. There is no escape from this law. "He that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption." The other side is also true. Live nobly, be true and pure and meek, cultivate love and self-sacrifice, and these Divine qualities will expand into larger strength and fuller beauty and ripeness. "He that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life eternal." "Every man shall receive the things done in the body—the self-same things—according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."

And now, passing from the present and looking into the far-off future, what do we hope for? Christ spoke of the harvest-home of humanity. Mankind, in this world, is like a vast field wherein

are sown both good seed and tares. As yet the wheat and the tares—good and evil—are growing together. So it must be. But in the end of the world the tares shall be uprooted by the angels of God, and bound together into bundles and be burned. Mankind, so long troubled and overgrown with the tares which an enemy hath sown, shall at last be cleansed, weeded of all evil. Only the good and true shall remain. Then shall be the harvest-home of the world, and God be all in all.

BRISTOL.

THOMAS HAMMOND.



THE PARABLE OF THE BLADE, THE EAR, THE FULL CORN.

“How important to know what to expect in reference to the growth of the seed of the Word, whether in the individual or in the community, to prevent Christians being scandalised when things turn out altogether contrary to expectation! None the less important is the parable, that it proclaims a truth men are slow to understand or be reconciled to; a fact whereof we have sufficient evidence in the way in which this portion of Christ’s parabolic teaching has often been handled. The law of growth in the spiritual world not being duly laid to heart, has, therefore, not been found here; and the parable consequently has been misinterpreted, or rather scarcely interpreted at all. Few of our Lord’s parables have been more unsatisfactorily expounded, as there are few in which a right exposition is more to be desired for the good of believers. It may seem presumptuous to say this, by implication censuring our brethren and commending ourselves. But a man’s capacity to expound particular portions of Scripture depends largely on the peculiarities of his religious experience; for here, as in other spheres, it holds true that we find what we bring. Suppose, *e.g.*, that the experience of a particular Christian has made him intimately acquainted with the momentous business of waiting on God for good earnestly desired and long withheld. The natural result will be an open eye for all Scripture texts, and they are many, which speak of that exercise, and a ready insight into their meaning. The case supposed is the writer’s own, and, therefore, the parable now to be studied has been to him for many years a favourite subject of thought and fruitful source of comfort, viewed as a repetition in parabolic form of the Psalmist’s counsel: ‘Wait, I say, on the Lord.’”—A. B. BRUCE, D.D.

Germ of Thought.

The Gold God.

"THE IDOLS OF THE HEATHEN ARE SILVER AND GOLD."—
Psalm cxxxv. 15.

IDOLATRY consists in giving to any object, whether animate or inanimate, the work of man's hands, or the work of the Divine hands, the love and worship which belongs to the Supreme Existence. "Thou shalt have no other God but Me." But to have Him means to love Him with all the heart, mind, and strength. The god of the man is the object he most loves. Hence gold is a divinity, and by no means an insignificant one, perhaps the chief.

I.—The gold god is the most POPULAR of the gods. It is said that ancient Greece and Rome had not less than thirty thousand divinities, and that in modern heathendom, at present, their name is legion. But throughout this civilized world the gold-god reigns supreme. Tell me is there aught besides that engrosses so much of human thoughts, human affections, human plans, activities and time, as gold? Christendom, it is true, has throughout its mighty populations *certain ecclesiastical* buildings, in which the true and only God is *formally* and *occasionally* worshipped; but in well nigh all its private dwellings, in all its hours of life, the gold-god is worshipped with all the heart, mind, soul, and strength.

"Your god, your great Bel," says *Charlotte Brontë*, "your fish-tailed Dagon rises before me as a demon. You, and such as you, have raised him to a throne, put on him a crown, given him a sceptre. Behold how he governs. See him busied at the work he likes best—making marriages. He binds the young to the old, the strong to the imbecile. He stretches out the arm of

Mezentius, and fetters the dead to the living. In his realm there is hatred—secret hatred; there is disgust—unspoken disgust; there is treachery—family treachery; there is vice—deep, deadly, domestic vice. In his dominions children grow unloving between parents who have never loved; infants are nursed in deception from their very birth, they are reared in an atmosphere corrupt with lies. Your god rules at the bridal of kings; look at your royal dynasties! Your deity is the deity of foreign aristocracies—analyse the blue blood of Spain! Your god is the Hymen of France; what is French domestic life? All that surrounds him hastens to decay; all declines and degenerates under his sceptre.”

“Commerce has set the mark of selfishness,
The signet of its all-enslaving power,
Upon a shining ore, and called it gold:
Before whose image bow the vulgar great,
The vainly rich, the miserable proud,
The mob of peasants, nobles, priests, and kings,
And, with blind feelings, reverence the power
That grinds them to the dust of misery;
But in the temple of their hireling hearts
Gold is a living god, and rules in scorn
All earthly things but virtue.”—*Shelley*.

And yet we here, in England, forsooth, send out men to the heathen in order to denounce and abolish idolatry. Surely a self-conceited superstition has blinded our eyes to moral congruities. The gold-god despatching his devotees through heathendom to destroy all other idols, that he may have no rival. Civilization everywhere multiplies the shrines, the altars, and the devotees of mammon.

II.—The gold-god is the most MISCHIEVOUS of the gods. The ponderous wheels of Juggernaut's chariot have crushed millions, and their damning revolution still continues; Krishna, Moloch and other heathen divinities have tortured and destroyed their devotees, but is there a divinity in the long roll of idolatrous worship more ruthlessly cruel, more terribly destructive than the gold-god?

(1) *How soul-debasing!* It deadens the sense of virtue, blinds moral perceptions, seals up the social sympathies, manacles the moral faculties, and chains that soul made to wing the immeasurable regions of light and truth to a mere clod of dust. It is a law that the soul can never rise above its god.

(2) *How peace disturbing!* It keeps its devotee in a constant tumult. It breaks the harmony of families, disturbs the order of society, raises nations into war and bloodshed. "Midas," says *Carlyle*, "longed for gold and insulted the Olympians. He got gold so that whatever he touched became gold, and he, with his long ears, was little the better for it. Midas had insulted Apollo and the gods: the gods gave him his wish, and a pair of long ears which also were a good appendage to it. What a truth in these old fables!" *Dr. John Harris*, a dear old friend of mine, has thus written about this gold-god. "Gold is the only power which receives universal homage. It is worshipped in all lands without a single temple, and by all classes without a single hypocrite; and often has it been able to boast of having armies for its priesthood, and hecatombs of human victims for its sacrifices. Where war has slain its thousands, gain has slaughtered its millions; for while the former operates only with the local and fitful terrors of an earthquake, the destructive influence of the latter is universal and increasing. Indeed, war itself—what has it often been but the art of gain practised on a larger scale; the covetousness of a nation resolved on gain, impatient of delay, and leading on its subjects to deeds of rapine and blood? Its history is the history of slavery and oppression in all ages. For centuries, Africa, one quarter of the globe, has been set apart to supply the monster with victims, thousands at a meal. And at this moment, what a populous and gigantic empire can it boast! The mine with its unnatural drudgery, the manufactory with its swarms of squalid misery, the plantation with its imbruted gangs, and the market and the exchange with their furrowed and careworn countenances, these are only specimens of its more menial offices and subjects. Titles and honours are among its rewards, and thrones at its disposal. Among its counsellors are kings, and many of the great and mighty of the earth are enrolled among its subjects.

Where are the waters not ploughed by its navies? What imperial element is not yoked to its car? Philosophy itself has become a mercenary in its pay; and science, a votary at its shrine, brings all its latest discoveries as offerings to its feet. What part of the globe's surface is not rapidly yielding up its lost stores of hidden treasure to the spirit of gain? Scorning the childish dream of the philosopher's stone, it aspires to turn the globe itself into gold."

LONDON.

DAVID THOMAS, D.D.

The Influence of Christian Hope.

"AND EVERY MAN THAT HATH THIS HOPE IN HIM PURIFIETH HIMSELF, EVEN AS HE IS PURE."—1 *John* iii. 3.

1. *We are children of hope, yet happily ignorant of each other's hope.* But this we know, that if we are to realize our hopes we must realize them upon certain inexorable lines.

2. *If we would be rich we must value the trifles.* We have no mental wings by which we may perch ourselves upon the top-most rundle of the ladder of knowledge. We must begin with, and drudge away from the A B C. The way to fame is as exactly marked out.

3. *To realize the greatest hope we must "purify ourselves, even as He is pure."* John puts the purity first, the glorious vision last. This is the order in which it fell from the lips of Christ. "The pure in heart shall see God." Catching the likeness is to be the toil of personal Christian life. When mammon, or fame, is in quest, a fluke will serve the turn; but purity is the unbending, inexorable line that we must follow to eternity this gladness of St. John.

Here we are led to notice THE PURIFICATION.

(1) *Men never have, men, perhaps, never will, in this life, stand upon one common level, morally.* Degeneracy and spirituality

are co-existent in ever-varying degree. The Scriptures recognize this. There are the Timothys, nourished from childhood by the Divine word; the Samuels, with a nature all attentive for the voice of God. These have their place and credit. But there is this common ground still, all men are cleansed or need it. Men justly boast that they are not afflicted with this and the other vice, but only those who feel they have been washed in the fountain express themselves with any confidence as to their fitness for the kingdom.

(2) *Our original self escapes us.* The picture of self, upon which we so admiringly look, is only the cartoon of our tailoring, without which society would proclaim us outlaws. Let us go in search of this original self. Where shall we find it? Skulking behind common honesty, decent habits, native harmlessness; sheltering under the ægis of church attendance; many prayers and fastings. We betray no eagerness to know where the name or principle of evil dwells in this anatomy; no eagerness to sack the hateful mansion. But this emphatic statement of the apostle drags up that original self from its lurking places that we may see it, a thing to be purged, a thing unfit for the kingdom.

3. *The word "Purity" will also help us to the perfect picture.* Simplicity, as used by scientific chemists and metallurgists, is the primary meaning of the word "pure." The state of being unmixed, uncompounded. Things are pure or impure as there is absence of, or presence of alloy. Human nature is a strange unhappy amalgam of earth and heaven, of the carnal and the spiritual, of the diabolic and the Divine. This is the perfect picture of self. Earth, hell, and heaven in combination. The word suggests also what is needed,—the separation of the base from the precious, the alloy from the gold.

(4) *John gives us the degree,—"As He is pure."* The thought of impossibility strikes us. We feel we shall be for ever out-distanced by this model. Hence it is pretty certain we should never have set up such an exalted type for ourselves. As children of hope we should have poised the reachable. The old Romans and Greeks set up their men of honour, their sages, their heroes, and died unpossessed of the graces they admired. So we should

have set up lesser lights, and, while toiling after their reflection, should have perished, enveloped with their shadows. "Like Him"—"Pure as He is Pure." It is a long way off! It is a blessed possibility. Let there be no toning of it down. Toning down is dangerous. The higher the model the higher we shall rise.

(5) "*Purifies himself.*" This, perhaps, even more than the greatness of the Model, suggests the idea of impossibility. As we think of ourselves, and look upon the Model, we cry—"Woe is me, I am undone!" Who is sufficient for this? The greatest of English Poets only uttered the feelings of the consciously guilty soul when he spoke of "Black and grained spots as would not leave their tinct;" or, when he made another character to say—"Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood clean from mine hand? No; this mine hand will rather the multitudinous seas incarnadine, making the green one red." "Can the leopard change his spots, or the Ethiopie change his skin?"

No one who has made this attempt which John urges will say it is easy. It is not easy to swim against the flood. Striving after this heavenly ideal is something like the swimmer fighting with the tide and broken water. Those who have begun the trial only know how great a hold sin has upon them. How difficult the serpent sin is to shake off. How difficult to cast out of the heart's home the strong man armed. Difficult, but not impossible! The force of this "himself" is personal responsibility; implies no more than that we avail ourselves of the means to attain this purity. It is not impossible, because heaven commands it.

(6) *The hope itself has much to do with the compassing of the end, viz., Purity.* We rise or sink with our hopes. We are, our lives are, what our hopes are. Mercenary hopes will make us still more mercenary, covetous, carnal. Low, base hopes will assuredly drag us downward. Hope that is pure and holy will lift the soul out of its environment of base things. This hope in its own sweet secret influence will cast down and cast out things alien to itself. "This hope sets the stamp of vanity on all that men have deemed essential since the fall."

(7) "*Purifies himself.*" When does He say this to us? Under the full blaze of Him who lights up the sun. "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all." There is no pillar, or corner, or shadow where this sinful flesh can skulk away. This increases our difficulty. Yes, John wants it too. He wants us, in God's light, to realize our blackest, foulest, damnedst, self. Do you realize this? Now hear him say to you, "The blood of Jesus Christ His son cleanseth from all sin." We are brought out into the light of God, and to the side of the cleansing fountain to hear this hard saying—"Purifies himself, as He is pure." The mercy is larger than the duty; the remedy ampler than our disease. The Fountain has more energy than our sin, "cleanses from all sin."

Have any tried and failed? Try again, brother; "Heaven fights on our side."

MORPETH.

JOHN HOGG.

Stephen's Faith and its Source.

"STEPHEN, A MAN FULL OF FAITH AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT."
—*Acts* vi. 5.

INTRODUCTION.—The Grecians were distinguished from the Hebrews chiefly by their use of the Greek language, and the Septuagint as their version of the Scriptures. See *Hellenist*, in Smith's Bible Dictionary, and Alford on Acts vi. 1-7. Jews of both these classes had been converted to Christianity, and were to be found in the church at Jerusalem. Between the Grecians and the Hebrews no very friendly feeling existed. The Hebrews looked down upon the Grecians as a half-Gentile set, and the Grecians resented their contempt. Even when representatives of the two classes had been united together in the fellowship of Christ's church they did not entirely throw away their jealousies. The first verses of the chapter tell us of an unpleasantness that arose between them, and of the apostle's wise settlement of the dispute by the appointment of the seven (so called) deacons. Of

these the chief was Stephen, who is described as "a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit."

I.—STEPHEN'S FAITH. Soon after his appointment to the office of deacon, Stephen, having aroused the enmity of certain Jews, was brought up before the Council on a charge of blasphemy. From the speech he made in defence we may gather some of the leading features of his faith.

(a) *Stephen believed that God's hand was discernible in history.* He gives a rapid survey of the Scripture story from the call of Abraham to the death of Jesus, and shows how all had been overruled by God. The common notion is that kings and statesmen make history. Stephen believed that God made it. To him the value of history was not merely that it told succeeding generations the things that had happened to their fathers, and the deeds their fathers had done, but that it revealed God, made known His character, principles, and relationship to man. A man is as much a man whether he knows or does not know that such and such things have happened in days gone by; but a record of the past is of inestimable value as it makes God known. History, as a mere chronicle of events, is but a valley of dry bones; but when God is seen in it the dry bones become living men, "an exceeding great army," marching forward to that

"One, far off, Divine event,
To which the whole creation moves."

The life and soul of history is God. It is noticeable that Stephen's speech is far from exact in its statements. Dean Stanley points out no less than twelve differences from the Mosaic history. But mere precision of record was not his aim. He desired to show the purposes of God. You discern God's hand in the seasons of the year; and nations have their spring-tides of freshness and growing power, their summers of luxury, and their winters of seeming death, and God's hand may be seen in these. History without God is like a picture without soul. There may be the most minute exactitude of delineation, and yet no life. The true artist will sacrifice the rectitude of a line that he may express the soul of his subject. The race has been, and is, under God's guidance, marching onward to a bourn of God's determining,

"When the Son of Man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him."

(b) *Stephen believed that the most noticeable way-mark of the universal march had just been passed.* It was the cross of Jesus. So far the race had been journeying on and on to Calvary. The life and death of Jesus were not mere events among others, but the events to which all previous history had been working up.

(c) *Stephen believed that Jesus, after His cross and passion, had risen from the dead, and ascended to the right hand of the Father.* How firmly he believed this the latter part of his address testifies. Indeed, it was something more than belief, it was assurance. While his enemies "gnashed on him with their teeth," he, undismayed, "looked up steadfastly into heaven," &c. (chapter vii., verses 55 and 56.)

(d) *Stephen believed that the exalted Jesus still cared for, and could help His servants in all their labour and suffering upon earth.* He beheld Jesus "standing on the right hand of God," as if ready to assist him, and he prayed to Jesus.

II.—STEPHEN'S POSSESSION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

(a) *It was this that gave life to his faith.* Many have given an intellectual assent to all that Stephen believed, without being influenced by it as he was. They have had none of his divine enthusiasm. It is not the correctness of the creed that makes a man a Christian, in the highest sense, but the quickening power of the Holy Spirit.

(b) *If we would be useful as servants of God among men we must be baptized in the Holy Ghost.*

(c) *Nay, we cannot live aright without this.*

"And every virtue we possess,
And every conquest won,
And every sigh for holiness,
Are His alone."

(d) *The most important question we can be asked is, "Have ye received the Holy Ghost?"* We may know, without a doubt, whether we have or have not. If we have, we shall bring forth the fruit of the Spirit, "love, joy," &c. (Gal. v. 22.)

MORETON-IN-MARSH.

J. KIRK PIKE.

True Human Blessedness.

“JESUS ANSWERED AND SAID UNTO HER, WHOSOEVER DRINKETH OF THIS WATER SHALL THIRST AGAIN: BUT WHOSOEVER DRINKETH OF THE WATER THAT I SHALL GIVE HIM SHALL NEVER THIRST; BUT THE WATER THAT I SHALL GIVE HIM SHALL BE IN HIM A WELL OF WATER SPRINGING UP INTO EVERLASTING LIFE.”—*John* iv. 13, 14.

OUR blessed Lord, during His earthly life, paid attention to persons of various character and in different circumstances. The indigent and affluent, individuals and crowds, alike shared His sympathy and care. He paid equal attention to Nicodemus, who came to him by night, and to the woman of Samaria, who met Him at Jacob's well, as He did to the crowds that thronged His pathway as He performed His wondrous works. Men pursue fame, and eagerly embrace it; fame pursued Christ, but He Divinely declined it. One soul was to Him of inestimable value, and to lead it into the light of His love He would proclaim the glad tidings of His Gospel at night, or when He was weary and sitting on the well. How Christ adapted His discourse, on the present occasion, to the circumstances of the place and the character of His auditor. With what sublime simplicity He ascended from temporal to spiritual things, teaching some of the most valuable lessons that men in all ages can lay to heart and translate into every-day life. Christ here bears witness of Himself, that He is “the gift of God,” and explains wherein true human blessedness consists; not in selfish, sensuous indulgence, but in the enjoyment of inward spiritual life. “The water that I shall give him,” &c. In these words Christ has clearly revealed

I.—THE SOURCE FROM WHICH TRUE HUMAN BLESSEDNESS SPRINGS. Earthly good is not to be despised, for our happiness depends largely upon the temporal blessings we enjoy. But, the soul has longings that the whole universe, apart from God, could not satisfactorily supply. Whoso drinketh of the streams of time-bounded blessing soon thirsts again. Earthly good is *around* a man, not *within* him; the spiritual blessing Christ imparts is

adapted to *inner hunger and thirst*. The emblem here employed gathers up those employed in the Old Testament, where God compares himself to "the Fountain of living waters," and where the blessings of the Gospel are offered in the words, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters," &c. Water is suggestive of *life-giving, refreshing, cleansing*; the blessings Christ gives, therefore, meet our moral needs, as *sinful, suffering, dying* creatures. We are thus taught (a) *The inestimable value of Christ* as "the gift of God;" (b) *The indispensableness of the blessings He bestows*; (c) *The Divinity of His nature*; that He was able to give, on His own authority as well as from His own fulness, such priceless good. A greater than any mortal man is here.

II.—THE CHANNEL THROUGH WHICH TRUE HUMAN BLESSEDNESS FLOWS. "Shall be in him," &c. The believer is not dependent for his joy upon external circumstances, his keenest delights do not come through the avenue of his senses; his blessedness springs up from *within*, as his soul rises and progresses in religion. His heart becomes as a well-watered garden, full of the fragrance of prayer and praise, and clothed with the beauty of holiness. Spiritual life does not consist in external excitement; spiritual joy does not consist in sensuous pleasure; the kingdom of heaven is *within* the soul, in its faith, hope, love. Those who thus possess Christ *in them* "the hope of glory," do not thirst for greater blessedness, for they have a "peace which passeth all understanding," and "a joy that is unspeakable and full of glory." The blessings that Christ bestows are sufficient to satisfy the spiritual wants of the heart of man. True religion, then, is a matter of *faith and experience*, and its best evidence is *within the breast* of its possessor. True blessedness is not something *put on*, or conferred by the world, but is imparted by Christ, and flows through every faculty of the human soul.

III.—THE OCEAN TO WHICH HUMAN BLESSEDNESS RISES. "Springing up into everlasting life." Water rises to its own level, and the life that comes from a Divine source will ascend thither. Streams of mere worldly enjoyment will sink away in the sands of time; the pleasures of sin, which are but for a

season, will be lost in the dark caverns of despair, or stagnate in the dead sea of remorse; but true spiritual joy shall spring up into everlasting life. Even here, how spiritual blessedness springs up, with vitality and vigour, in *happy memories, joyful experiences, glorious anticipations*. Death will remove everything that has impeded the rising of real joy, will remove every hindrance in the way of perfect bliss. Our bodies are of the dust, and to dust they must return; but our spirits—if renewed and sanctified here—shall rise, when the hour of our departure comes, into everlasting life.

CONCLUSION.—Let us thank God for such an unspeakable gift. Let us accept it and make it known to others. *Experience* of its blessedness will be the best proof of its divinity. The water of life springing up within us will indicate its blessedness and beauty to others, by our beneficent deeds and Christly character. Drawing near to our loving Redeemer, in faith and prayer, let us each devoutly exclaim—

“Thou of life the Fountain art,
Freely let me take of Thee;
Spring Thou up within my heart,
Rise to all eternity.”

CLIFTON.

FREDERICK W. BROWN.

Watching unto Prayer.

“WATCHING THEREUNTO;” *i. e.*, UNTO THIS VERY THING.—
Eph. vi. 18.

I.—THE DUTY,—Watching unto Prayer.

By many, Prayer is subject to theoretical disparagement, or practical neglect. Paul was himself a man of prayer; he both sought the prayers of others, and urged for themselves the duty and importance of prayer. His conception of life is a state of war, and his advice is—keep open the reserves and resources by prayer; and sleep not, but, like outpost or sentinel, “Watch,” “Watch unto Prayer.”

II.—THE REASONS ENFORCING THIS DUTY, as drawn from the relation of Watchfulness and Prayer.

(1) Watching is the *ally* of Prayer. It is itself a duty, and evidences the sincerity of Prayer. It is an equal duty, being imposed by the same authority and showing the same obedience.

(2) Watching is the great *auxiliary* of Prayer.

i. Watch with a *view* to Prayer—that we pray. Neglect is not impossible. Spirituality is imperfect in the best. Social intercourse rarely fosters devotion. Business, and even pleasure, press upon us, giving less time, less desire, less strength for Prayer. What is the safeguard? Paul says: “Watching unto Prayer.” Christ says: “Watch and Pray.” Peter says: “Watching unto Prayer;” and, in so saying, Peter remembers a lesson painfully learnt, and shows us how to employ, for the good of others, even the bitterest experiences of life.

ii. Watch over the *spirit* of Prayer—that we pray aright. (1) We may have the form of Prayer without the reality. Watch, if the fire is to be ever burning upon the altar; (2) The spirit of Prayer is a tender and delicate thing. Do we *value* Prayer? Do we *seek* it? Is it *loved*? “Watch unto this.”

iii. Watch for *opportunities* of Prayer,—that we make full use of it.

(1) As to all *regular* seasons of devotion;

(2) As to the *special*,—there are *circumstances* of exigency, of perplexity, of temptation. There are *times* specially favourable, calm, dark, &c. There are favouring *moods and impulses*. Robert Hall said,—“I never resist an impulse to prayer.” Be then on the outlook for all these, “Watching unto this very thing.”

Do you “watch” over treasure? business? reputation? family? health? “Watch unto Prayer.”

BRISTOL.

J. P. ALLEN, M.A.

The Church of the Living God.

“THE CHURCH OF THE LIVING GOD, THE PILLAR AND GROUND OF THE TRUTH.”—1 *Timothy* iii. 15.

FROM the text we gain—

I.—THE TRUE IDEA OF THE CHURCH AS A DIVINE INSTITUTION. It is not the creation of Christian expediency, or of human origin at all; but “the Church of the Living God,” having its origin, not in the thoughts and schemes of men—not even in the wise foresight of apostles anxious for the future stability of their converts and for the progress of the truth, but in the calm of God’s eternal purpose. It represents His thought of what our redeemed and regenerated humanity should be in its internal fellowship, and in its wider relations to the world. He has appointed its *ministry* to bear witness to the truth; He has established its *sacraments* to be the means of grace; He has provided in its *offices* for Christian edification; and He has invested it with an ever valid *commission* to advance His truth on every side. When the Church is adopted as a convenient machine to subserve the purposes of secular governments, and its subordinate and chief pastorates become the appendages of property or political power, not only is the freedom of the Church necessarily lost amidst such earthly entanglements, but the true idea of the Church as the Church of the Living God is obscured, to the detriment of its spirituality, and the consequent diminution of its power as a converting and sanctifying agency in the lives of men.

II.—The text suggests that the Christian Church is the Church of the Living God by HIS SPIRITUAL INDWELLING AND INVISIBLE GOVERNMENT. “Ye are built,” says the apostle, writing to the same church, over which Timothy had been appointed the chief pastor, “on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone; in whom the whole building fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in Whom ye are also builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.” Weighty and wondrous words! Let us not heedlessly miss their significance. The Church is not like some

vast building which has been reared and then left in untenanted vacancy; but the ideal Church of the New Testament is a living congregation filled with the presence of the Living God. How the words, "the House of God, the Church of the Living God," must have struck the thoughtful believers of Ephesus. *There*, in the magnificent temple that rose in white and glittering marble above their city, was the dead image of the goddess Diana. It was a splendid and costly shrine, with a swathed image, veiled by the curtain which fell behind the great altar. *Here*, was the house of the Living God, glorified with His presence, filled with His grace, where He dwelt ever to be found, where He walked in active agency to bless; and the contrast conveyed a truth to be always most surely believed and strenuously maintained; for what is it but a defect of faith in the undeparting presence and never-ceasing energy of the Living Lord of the Church which has led to the creation of some visible head of final authority? What is it but insusceptibility to the real presence of Christ in every assembly and ordinance of His Church, which has invested some particular ordinance with a kind of presence which alike insults our reverence and our faith? Throughout the entire teaching of Christ and the writings of His apostles we obtain the true idea of the Church—an idea, which it will always cheer us, whether as ministers or people, to cherish; that it is a spiritual house built up of living souls for Divine inhabitation; among whom He dwells, with equal grace and power, ever to be found, and always to bless. We learn—

III.—THE MAIN FUNCTION OF THE CHURCH—TO MAINTAIN AND DIFFUSE THE TRUTH. The truth may be stored in ancient documents, formulated in creeds, expressed in symbol, and disseminated in books; but its best guardians and promoters are those who know and feel its power, by whom it is assuredly believed, in whom it is a living experience, in whose life and character it finds a ready utterance. Such are its most faithful guardians, its best expositors, its most effective advocates. It is, indeed, important to preserve the sacred manuscripts with pious care; to guard or restore the purity of the text; to see that the original be faithfully rendered in the translations into the vulgar

tongue: but all would be futile without the living Church—those who have “received the truth,” who have themselves “obeyed the truth,” and who “walk according to the truth of the Gospel.” Church-life is the personal realization of spiritual truth. To know the truth as a living experience, enlightening thought, purifying feeling, forming the character, and directing the conduct, is to be qualified for personal union in the mission of the Church of Christ, which is to maintain and advance the truth “as the truth is in Jesus.”

The practical conclusion to be drawn from the divine idea of the Church, and the great spiritual charge committed to it as “the pillar and ground of the truth,” exhibiting before men the saving truth of the Gospel, is to have that truth in ourselves as the spirit of our life. True, we have to guard the house and dwelling-place of God, that unholy feet do not defile it, and yet to be so alive with spiritual sympathy and perception as to woo and win within it those who are quickened with the first pulses of spiritual life. But there is yet an earlier concern; it is that the truth to be conserved and diffused may live and rule in our own hearts. How eagerly will he maintain the truths of the incarnation and atonement who can say, “He loved me, and gave Himself for me”! How precious the truth of justification by faith to him who can say, “I have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ”! How precious the truth of the resurrection of the Lord to him who is the subject of the moral miracle, and is risen with Christ to the energies and joys of the Divine life! Let then the “word of Christ dwell in us richly.” By the purity, by the charity, by the holy order and peacefulness of churches, the divinely committed truth is best maintained and diffused. A holy spiritual community is a pillar engraven on every side with God’s truth. But as the entire Church is the house of God, so it may be said of every intelligent and stedfast Christian that he is a column of moral strength, bearing the truth written within and without by the finger of the Spirit of God. Would we guard the truth as our charge, and advance it as our appointed service, we must live in it as the principle of our own being and the element of our own immortality.

FINCHLEY.

THOMAS HILL.

Homiletical Commentary.

NOTES ON THE EPISTLE OF JAMES.

Keeping The Law.

Chapter ii. 10-13.—“FOR WHOSOEVER SHALL KEEP THE WHOLE LAW, AND YET OFFEND IN ONE POINT, HE IS GUILTY OF ALL. FOR HE THAT SAID, DO NOT COMMIT ADULTERY, SAID ALSO, DO NOT KILL. NOW, IF THOU COMMIT NO ADULTERY, YET IF THOU KILL, THOU ART BECOME A TRANSGRESSOR OF THE LAW. SO SPEAK YE, AND SO DO, AS THEY THAT SHALL BE JUDGED BY THE LAW OF LIBERTY. FOR HE SHALL HAVE JUDGMENT WITHOUT MERCY, THAT HATH SHEWED NO MERCY; AND MERCY REJOICETH AGAINST JUDGMENT.”

THE “one point” of offence which called forth this very sweeping statement was that of “respect of persons,” the sinful partiality of which church members were guilty when they flattered the rich to the disparagement of the poor, saying to the man in gay clothing, “Sit thou here in a good place, while they said to the man in vile raiment, stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool.” They *had offended* in this one point; they had despised the poor; they had transgressed against the Royal Law which says, Thou shalt love *thy neighbour*—all thy neighbours—rich and poor alike; and they had been convicted by this law as transgressors, and, of course, offending in this one point, guilty in **guilty in one**, this point. But does this warrant the apostle to **guilty in all**. make of it what he here does? does it justify him in saying not only that if a man offends in one point he is guilty in one point (this we can understand and assent to), but that if he offend in one point he is guilty in all points? Is the principle a

sound one? Will it bear the test of reason? Does the experience we have of the workings of law, in the obeying or in the disobeying of it, bear him out in what he says?

One thing we may safely say, it is what very few people, indeed, really believe. If we were to put the plain question to any number of people, did they really think, supposing they kept the most of God's commandments tolerably well, and only indulged in the transgression of one of these, that He would hold them guilty of breaking them all, how many would say, "*Surely yes?*" Would not many, judging from what we know *surely not*. of men, be ready to say not only "*Surely not,*" but also to add that in consideration of their having tolerably well kept so many of the others, they should be treated very leniently indeed for the one they had not kept at all? A man who has spent his days in making and hoarding money, and of whom not a soul on earth has been the better, will tell you, and he will even comfort himself on his death-bed with it, that he has never been guilty of murder; or a man who has given himself up to intemperance will tell you he has never been a cheat, or a covetous man; or a man who has merely lived a useless life, apparently doing neither harm nor good, will tell you that he has never been dishonest, never injured his neighbours, always lived at peace with them: every one of them firm in the belief that in consideration of his general worthy conduct, he will be excused for particular unworthy conduct; that in consideration of the nine tolerably well kept commandments, he will be let off for the deliberately violated tenth; plainly disbelieving the assertion of the apostle: "Whosoever shall keep the whole law and offend in one point, he is guilty of all."

Which is right? Are they right who think God will hold them guiltless of the one law they break in consideration of the others, which they keep? or, are they cherishing a dangerous and destructive delusion, and is the apostle speaking but "the word of truth and soberness," when, with all the vehemence of his intensely practical nature he warns them against it? It is worth while to enquire. There are few subjects that concern us so deeply.

Observe what the question is. When the apostle speaks about "offending in one point" he is not referring specially to some sudden solitary offence, which a man has been hurried into under the impulse of some strong temptation, and for which, as soon as he comes to himself he is sincerely repentant and sorrowful, though of course even such a sin as this comes under the principle laid down. What the apostle has before his mind is

What the apostle does not mean here. some such case as this: a man professing to render obedience to the rest of God's commandments, yet indulging in the transgression of one of them, and this, in the belief that he will be able to come to some kind of arrangement with God, whereby the obedience will not only cancel the disobedience, but where all the advantage will be on his own side. He will be let off for the disobedience, and, in addition, get something in the shape of a reward for his obedience. This is the man whose case, not an uncommon one, the apostle is considering, and this is the man with whom we have here to deal.

Taking him on his own showing, assuming that he has kept all the others, and that he has offended on only one point, that he is chargeable with no other sins but those with which he charges himself, it is to be replied, on the principle the apostle here lays down, that he is chargeable with every offence, that he is guilty of the whole law, exposed, and justly exposed to the penalty of the whole law, that is to say, that what he is trying to do is impossible to be done; breaking one he breaks all, and in breaking one breaking all, he is guilty of all.

Three aspects of the Law of God. There are three aspects in which the law of God may be regarded, and looking at it in any one of them we shall see how impossible it is to keep it except by keeping it altogether. There is, first, the principle of obedience to the law, that is, love of the law, desire after and delight in it. Then, again, there is the unity of the law, its oneness and wholeness, in virtue of which it cannot be disintegrated or dismembered. There is One moral law, and the moral law is One. And, once more, there is the authority of the law, the authority of God the Giver of the law, and of all the law,—

authority which is as much a Unity as the law itself, or as the principle of love by which alone it can be obeyed.

Take, first, the principle of love to the law without which there can be no keeping of the law. Now, in the case supposed, **First, Love to the Law.** the man says, "I keep all the other laws, I obey them and I love to obey them; I have really a delight in them, but all the same I still indulge myself in the disobedience of this *one*." So he says: let us enquire of him concerning that love to the law which can take delight in part of that which is holy, just, and good, and at the same time have such an utter aversion to another part which is equally good, that it can systematically and deliberately trample upon and insult it! And we shall put it to him in this way,—“You have a child whom you love, to whom your heart goes out, and whose filial affectionate obedience to your will is the joy of your life, but you come to know that while he is quite ready and apparently happy to do a great many things you bid him, there is one thing he deliberately refuses to do, disobeys, sets at nought! What do you say of *him*?” If he loved these other things I bid him do, he could not help loving this one as well; and if he obeyed those others because he loved them, he would have loved this one too: there is something radically wrong with him, all his obedience is no obedience, offending in one point he shows me he has never done anything else, but offended in them all. “Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter? Can the fig-tree bear olive berries, either a vine figs? So can no fountain both yield salt water and fresh!” This is your judgment upon your child! Well it is God’s judgment upon you! Love to God’s law is love to *all* God’s law, for it is all loveable alike; and the man who says I will not obey this part while I shall obey all the rest, convicts himself of being devoid of that love without which it is impossible to obey any part of it at all. You can only keep the law by loving it, but if you love it you will love the whole of it, and if you love the whole of it you will not seek to set at nought any part of it. You will keep, because you love, the whole Law.

But again, let us look at this obedience of some precepts of the law and disobedience of others in the light of the Unity, the wholeness, the Oneness of the Law. The man says he can break one portion of it and keep others; but what if it be replied, **The Oneness of the Law.** "There is only one law and there are no others! There are not fifty, or twenty, or ten commandments, there is only one commandment, one living organic revealed Will and law of God which cannot be taken to pieces, as if one piece were capable of being honoured apart from that organic whole from which it has been torn. The will of God is *one* thing, it is a Unity, a unified Representation of Himself to man, and failing to do homage to one part of it, we fail to do homage to the whole. The Moral Law is a complete thing, a Unity; you cannot take any part of it away without injuring the rest, loosen one part and you dislocate the others; but you, the man with whom we are dealing, single out one part which is not to your liking, and you outrage it, transgress, put it to shame! Do you think you are not at the same time outraging the whole of which it is a part? The ocean is a whole thing, a unity made up of seas and bays, and gulfs and straits; but cast a stone into any portion of it and it is the ocean into which it is cast, and the disturbance is felt at its furthest shore; lop off a branch from a stately tree and you have injured the tree as well as the branch; strike a large ball on any part of it, and it will quiver to the stroke over every part of its surface; break one of God's commandments and the stroke by which it is broken breaks all the others as well. It is impossible, the law being a living organic whole, to break one part and to keep the rest, to offend in one point and not be guilty of all.

Once more, look at all this in the light of the authority of the giver of the law. God is the Authority, and it is **The Authority of the Law.** His authority that is honoured or dishonoured in the keeping, or in the breaking of the law. Breaking the law which a man chooses to break, what does he make of the Authority of God? If he sets this at defiance at one point what is the reality or worth of that deference he professes to pay to it in other points? and would anything but the grossest stupidity

blind him to the fact that he has really no regard for it, and that all his professed regard is a delusion and a lie? Every deliberate transgression is a denial of the authority of God; it is virtually to say, "Who is the Lord that He should reign over us?" and therefore, however many seeming acts of obedience a man may have rendered to God, he shows by this one deliberate act of disobedience that, in his heart, he does not revere His authority.

To sum it all up in a word; to commit one deliberate sin is to partake of that spirit which lies at the root of all sin, is to take part with that which sympathises with all sin, is to oppose that which opposes all sin. To commit one deliberate sin is to strike at the root of all holiness, it is to fight against all goodness, it is to cast down and to trample upon all authority; for he that loveth and committeth a sin is destitute of the love of holiness, of reverence for the will of God, or of respect for His authority; and in this sense, this most real sense, he that offends in one offends against all; guilty of one he is guilty of all. For He that said, "Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill." Now, if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor,—not of the particular precept only, but of the law; for He that said the one said the other, and to strike against any one of them is to strike against Him. There is no

No possible possible way of escape from the stern statement of **way of escape** the apostle, "Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." And the more carefully and the more prayerfully we look at it in the light of conscience and of the reason of things, the more clearly shall we perceive there is no escape. We cannot hold the faith of the Lord Jesus Christ and be respecters of persons. We cannot obey the royal law, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," and be unmerciful to the poor. Denying the faith at one point we deny it altogether; striking at the royal law here, we trample it under foot and spurn it altogether from us. Offending in one we offend in all. No, there is no way of escape. Except the one which the apostle now opens up, which is to acknowledge this as **Yes! one way.** an absolute truth, and then to act on the belief of it: "*So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law*

of liberty." As if the apostle had said, Begin with this most salutary belief, that every sin we commit implicates us in all sin, that it makes a criminal of us in the eye of the holy law of God, liable to the penalty which attaches to all transgression—the wages of sin, which is death. It is a salutary belief, and how much guilt we should escape if we kept it ever in mind. What godly fear it would work in us. Well, says the apostle, begin with this salutary belief, and then remember, what again you are so apt to forget, that you are to be judged for all you say and for all you do at the judgment seat, and to receive there the due award of your deeds. We are to appear at, and we are to appear what we are at, the great white throne. We are to render our account to Him who sees the very secrets of our soul, from whose eyes nothing is hid, and by whom we shall be judged according to the law, holy, just, and good, which He gave us as the revelation of His will and the standard for our lives. *We must all appear.*

There will be a difference made, however, in that day,—a difference according to righteousness and truth. Some will be judged by the law, others will be judged by the law of liberty.

Righteous judgment. Those who have transgressed the law and who have not here, in the day of their merciful visitation, sought and obtained pardon, and with the pardon that newness of life, in the strength of which they would have been enabled to love the law and gradually to be conformed to its holy, just, and good likeness; those who have recklessly spurned from them the pardon and neglected the great salvation shall be judged by the law, and to be judged by the law is to be condemned. "The soul that sinneth it shall die," and if there be no pardon interposed it must die. On the other hand, those who, while breaking the law and thus guilty, have gladly complied with the conditions which put a pardon in their hands, and which ensured at the same time that love to the law which made them henceforth seek to obey it; those who, when God interposed on their behalf and offered them a full and a free pardon for all their offences, gratefully acquiesced and laid their help on One mighty to save; who put their case into the hands of the Advocate with the Father Jesus Christ, the righteous: those also shall be judged by law

but in their case it will be by "the law of liberty," the law of the Gospel, the law which, while it is not lowered one iota in its holy, just, and good demands, is now vitally bound up with the facts and the promises which are yea and amen in Christ Jesus, and from which the curse is taken away in Him. In the case of the impenitent unbeliever, at the great day, it will be seen that he has not obeyed, that he has broken the law. The law will then take its full penalty; the curse threatened will be the curse fulfilled. In the case of the pardoned believers, at that day, it will be seen from their works and from their character, from the results that have been wrought in them, the love and the purity and the holiness, that they did accept the pardon of the Lord, and that they welcomed His holy and pure, His sanctifying and purifying Spirit; and judged by this "law of liberty," righteously and openly, he will be not condemned but acquitted, declared to be, what by the grace of God he is, a pardoned and a purified soul. At the judgment seat it will be made to appear how terribly true on the one, "the wages of sin is death: how blessedly true on the other, "the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

These are truths; truths that very nearly concern us. Is not this the voice of wisdom, "so speak ye and so do," according to them; to order our speech and to order our conduct with a view to, as it bears upon, the day of judgment: *so to speak and so to do?*

For, and there is a dark back-ground, a dark possible other side, he shall have judgment without any merciful element in it, who showed judgment without any merciful element in it. It is an unmerciful thing, there is no pity or tenderness in it, there is nothing like Christ in it, to disparage the poor, to treat them without respect, to despise them, and he who does this, who does it consciously and deliberately, who makes manifest thereby that the love of the Gospel has no hold upon his affections or his conscience, this man shall be made manifest as an example of the great righteous law of retribution which runs through the universe; he shall be judged without mercy who showed no mercy. "O, thou wicked servant, I had compassion," &c. "If ye forgive not neither," &c.

But there is another side, and the apostle gladly turns to it : "and mercy," he tells us. "rejoices against judgment;" that is to say, a man who is very merciful, whose whole life has been the manifestation of mercy, whose every deed has been done in the spirit of the Merciful One; this man is not afraid of judgment, he is not cast down in the prospect of it, he rejoices against it, having the evidence within himself that it is the mercy of God in Jesus Christ that has enabled him to be merciful, assured that he shall stand in the judgment, not because he has been merciful, or on account of his deeds of mercy, but because through the mercy of Christ, which alone can give him standing there, he feels within himself the presence and the energy of the same spirit of mercy. If a man has felt the need of, and has experienced the power of, the mercy of God towards himself, he will necessarily show mercy to his fellow-men. This is one of the fruits of the Gospel; one of its sure results, and he may, and he ought to, comfort himself in it as a token that he will be on the side of the Merciful One in the judgment; in the strength of it he may rejoice over judgment. But if he is unmerciful to his fellow-men, if he is unmerciful in especial to the poor, if he tramples on the Royal Law and holds the faith of Christ in such unrighteousness, then he is not safe, and it is the most fatal delusion to think himself secure. His conduct shows that he has no part or lot in the mercy of Christ, in His spirit, or in His power. He is exposed and he is justly exposed, to the rigour of the inexorable Law, all whose demands he must now answer for himself. He has refused mercy, and he has not exercised mercy; "he shall have judgment without mercy that hath showed no mercy;" "and mercy rejoiceth over judgment."

The Gospel of this whole passage is, that there is no lowering, even by a hairs-breadth, of the law of God: it is holy, just, and good, and it remains ever above us with its holy, just, and good precepts, precepts which we are bound to obey in all their length, and breadth, and depth, and height, precepts which are inexorably just, inflexible, eternal as the heavens. Heaven and earth may pass away but the law of

No Lowering
of the Law.

God cannot pass away, not even so much as one jot or tittle of it. There it stands, the Revelation and the Manifestation of the pure and holy Will of the pure and the holy God, who must deny Himself before He can deny, before He can lower or set aside, His Pure and Holy Law. Who would wish that He should, or who would wish for any other Gospel but this? God's Law is Holy, Just, and Good, and, whatever comes of me, that law must be maintained! It is the Gospel of the Scriptures; and it finds a response in every earnest man. There is nothing to be hoped for from the man whose principles are based in the lowering of the law; but there are boundless possibilities of upward progress before him to whom the Law of God is sacred, with whom Duty is a holy thing, and whose watchwords are,—“Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.” “Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might.” Observe, it is not enough to stop there, but it *is* essential to begin there; and he who has little or no veneration for the majesty, the stern inexorableness, the even-handed justice, and who does not stand in awe before the never-to-be-evaded retributions of Law, will never attain to the true sense and feeling of that great remedial scheme by which its Author and Finisher magnified the Law and made it honourable, upheld it in the face of the Universe; the just God, and yet the Justifier of him who shelters himself within the refuge of His grace.

GLASGOW.

PETER RUTHERFORD.



“The human body might well be regarded as a mere simulacrum; but it envelopes our reality, it darkens our light, and broadens the shadow in which we live. The soul is the reality of our existence. Strictly speaking the human visage is a mask. The true man is that which exists under what is called man. If that being, which thus exists sheltered and secreted behind that illusion which we call the flesh, could be approached, more than one strange revelation would be made. The vulgar error is to mistake the outward husk for the living spirit.”—VICTOR HUGO.

SEEDS OF SERMONS ON THE SECOND BOOK OF THE KINGS.

A People's King and Priest, or Kingdom and Priesthood.

"IN THE SEVENTEENTH YEAR OF PEKAH," &c.—2 *Kings* xvi.

THROUGHOUT all lands, almost throughout all times, *two functionaries* have been at the head of the peoples, treading them down by oppression, and fattening on them by their greed. These functionaries do not seem to have been of Divine ordination, for the Almighty is represented as saying, "*They have set up kings, but not of Me, they have made princes, but I knew it not.*" Let us notice each functionary as presented in this chapter—the king and the priest—the one named *Ahaz*, the other *Urijah*.

I.—THE KINGHOOD. It is said, "In the seventeenth year of Pekah the son of Remaliah, Ahaz the son of Jotham king of Judah began to reign. Twenty years old was Ahaz when he began to reign, and reigned sixteen

years in Jerusalem, and did not that which was right in the sight of the Lord his God, like David his father." Here we learn that Ahaz was the son of Jotham, began to reign over Judah in his twentieth year, and that his reign continued for sixteen years. Elsewhere we are told that Hezekiah, his son, succeeded him at the age of twenty-five (See chap. xviii. 17). According to this he became a father when he was only eleven years of age. This we think is a mistake of the historian, although indeed it would seem among the Jews in Tiberias there are mothers of eleven years of age and fathers of thirteen. And in Abyssinia boys of ten years and twelve years enter into the marriage relationship (See Keil). The account given of Ahaz in this chapter furnishes us with an

illustration of several enormous evils.

First: *The de-humanising force of false religion.* Ahaz was an idolator. "He walked in the ways of the kings of Israel" we are told. Instead of worshipping the one true and living God, he bowed down before the idols of the kingdom. This false religion of his made him so *inhuman* that he "made his son to pass through the fire, according to the abominations of the heathen whom the Lord cast out from before the children of Israel, and he sacrificed and burnt incense in the high places, and on the hills, and under every green tree." Moloch was this idol god of fire, and the Rabbins tell us "that it was made of brass, and placed on a brazen throne, and that the head was that of a calf, with a crown upon it. The throne and image were made hollow, and a furious fire was kindled within it. The flames penetrated into the body and limbs of the idol, and when the arms were red hot the victim was thrown into them, and was almost immediately burnt to death." The revolting cruelty of

Moloch's worship is thus described by Milton:—

"In Argob and in Basan, to the stream
Of utmost Amon. Nor content with
such
Audacious neighbourhood, the wisest
heart
Of Solomon he led by fraud to build
His temple right against the temple
of God
On that opprobrious hill; and made
his grove
The pleasant valley of Hinnom,
Tophet thence
And black Gehenna, call'd the type
of hell."

Thus the idolatrous religion of this Ahaz de-humanised him, by destroying within him all filial affection and transforming him into a fiend. This is true, more or less, of all false religions. Idolatry is not the only religion that makes men cruel. A corrupt Judaism, and a corrupt Christianity, generate in their votaries the same de-humanising results. False religion kindled in Paul the savage ferocity of a wild beast. "He breathed out slaughter." Ecclesiastical history abounds with illustrations.

Secondly: *The national curse of a corrupt kingdom.* "Then Rezin king of Syria and Pekah son of Remaliah king of Israel came up to Jerusalem to war: and they besieged Ahaz, but could not overcome him. At

that time Rezin king of Syria recovered Elath to Syria, and drove the Jews from Elath: and the Syrians came to Elath, and dwelt there unto this day." These two kings, Rezin of Syria and Pekah of Israel, had their eyes upon this Ahaz, saw how his wickedness, had probably disgusted his people as well as themselves, had taken away their heart and exhausted their resources, until they felt that this was the time for striking at Jerusalem, taking possession of the metropolis and subjugating the country. And they made the attempt. Although they could not "overcome" Ahaz, failed to strike him down personally, yet they "recovered Elath to Syria, and drove the Jews from Elath: and came and dwelt there." So it has ever been, corrupt kings expose their country to danger, they invite the invader and make way for him.

Proudly up the regal heights they
sit in pampered power,
While fires smoulder under ground
that strengthen every hour.

Thirdly: *The mischievous issues of a temporary expediency.* Ahaz, in order to extricate himself from the

difficulties and trials which Rezin and Pekah had brought on his country, applies to the king of Assyria. "So Ahaz sent messengers to Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria, saying, I am thy servant and thy son: come up, and save me out of the hand of the king of Syria, and out of the hand of the king of Israel, which rise up against me. And Ahaz took the silver and gold that was found in the house of the Lord, and in the treasures of the king's house, and sent it for a present to the king of Assyria. And the king of Assyria hearkened unto him: for the king of Assyria went up against Damascus, and took it, and carried the people of it captive to Kir, and slew Rezin." What else could he do? To whom could he have looked for help in his emergency? The *right* thing to have done would have been the utter renunciation of his idolatry, submission to the Divine will, and invocation to the Almighty for help; but he followed what appeared to him the expedient, not the right, and hence two evils ensued.

(1) *He degraded himself.*

He sold himself as a slave to the king whose help he invoked. "I am thy servant and thy son: come up, and save me out of the hand of the king of Syria." What more dishonourable thing can a man do than to renounce his independency and become the slave of another? He loses his self-respect, which is the very essence of true manhood. Another mischief of his temporary expediency was—

(2) *He impoverished his people.* "And Ahaz took the silver and gold that was found in the house of the Lord, and in the treasures of the king's house, and sent it for a present to the king of Assyria." This silver and gold belonged to the nation. It was public property. What right had he to dispose of a fraction? No right whatever. He was a huge thief, nothing less. Alas, it is not uncommon for kings to rob the people, consume what they have never produced, live on the property of others, and thus impoverish the people. What happened with Ahaz must happen with all, in the long run, who pursue the expedient rather than the

right. The right alone is truly expedient. Notice—

II.—THE PRIESTHOOD. Urijah is the priest. There seems to have been more than one of this name, and nothing is known of him more than what is recorded in this chapter. He was a priest, who at this time presided in the Temple of Jerusalem. He seems to have been influential in the State, and, although a professed Monotheist, was in somewhat close connection with Ahaz the idolatrous king. Two things are worthy of note concerning him which too frequently characterise priests of all times—

First: *An obsequious obedience to the royal will.* The Assyrian king having taken Damascus is followed by Ahaz to the city in order, no doubt, to congratulate him on his triumphs. While at Damascus, Ahaz is struck with the beauty of an altar. He seems to have been so charmed with it that he commands Urijah, his priest, to make one exactly like it. "And king Ahaz sent to Urijah the priest the fashion of the altar, and the pattern of it, according to all the workmanship thereof."

Knowing the king would like it, with priestly obsequiousness he set to the work. "And Urijah the priest built an altar according to all that king Ahaz had sent from Damascus: so Urijah the priest made it against king Ahaz came from Damascus. And when the king was come from Damascus, the king saw the altar: and the king approached to the altar, and offered thereon." This obsequious priest not only did this, but, without one word of protest or reproof, he witnessed the idolatrous sacrifices of the king at the altar, and the position of the brazen altar in the Temple altered: further, he actually engaged according to the king's command in the services. "And king Ahaz commanded Urijah the priest, saying, Upon the great altar burn the morning burnt offering, and the evening meat offering, and the king's burnt sacrifice, and his meat offering, with the burnt offerings of all the people of the land, and their meat offering, and their drink offerings; and sprinkle upon it all the blood of the burnt offering, and all the blood of

the sacrifice: and the brazen altar shall be for me to enquire by. Thus did Urijah the priest, according to all that king Ahaz commanded." Here is also—

Secondly: *An obsequious silence to the royal profanation.* See what the king did, no doubt, in the presence of the priest. "And king Ahaz cut off the borders of the bases, and removed the laver from off them; and took down the sea from off the brazen oxen that were under it, and put it upon a pavement of stones. And the covert for the Sabbath that they had built in the house, and the king's entry without, turned he from the house of the Lord for the king of Assyria." This fawning, sacerdotal sycophant not only "did according to all king Ahaz commanded," but he stood by silently and witnessed without a word of protest this spoliation of the holy temple.

Had this priest acted according to his profession as a minister of the Most High God, he would have risen up in all the sternness of honesty and manhood against the first intimation of Ahaz concerning

the construction of an altar. He would have said, altars the most magnificent are not essential to religion: the sacrifices that the Most High require are a broken heart and contrite spirit; and when the command came to him to make such an altar, he would have felt it an insult to his conscience, an outrage on his loyalty to heaven, and have broken into thunders of reproof. When he saw the king's hand employed in disturbing and altering the furniture of the temple, he would have paralyzed the royal hand with his terrible reproofs. But instead of this, he, like his class in every age, seems to have been transported with the honour of seeing the royal presence, hearing the royal voice, and doing the royal bidding. A true priest should, by inflexible loyalty to heaven, mould and master kings, be lord para-

mount in all mundane affairs—the very king of men, governing, not by craft and force, fraud and violence, but by royal thoughts, actions, and aims.

CONCLUSION.—Is the miserable, obsequious spirit of this sacerdotal Urijah extinct? Nay, it is too rampant even here in England. What will not the priests do at the bidding of the sovereign? They will consecrate the banners of bloody war, and hymn in churches and cathedrals the praises of the mighty butchers of mankind. At the presence of royalty they are transported into an awe of silent rapture; they will encircle the brow of moral villains, who to them are more than heroes, they are saints of the Most High God,—*"Most gracious and religious."*

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PRESENT TIME.

Time was, is past; thou canst not it recall:
Time is, thou hast; employ the portion small:
Time future is not; and may never be:
Time present is the only time for thee.

SEEDS OF SERMONS ON THE EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS.

Epilogue Thoughts.

"BUT I HAVE ALL, AND ABOUND: I AM FULL, HAVING RECEIVED OF EPAPHRODITUS THE THINGS WHICH WERE SENT FROM YOU, AN ODOUR OF A SWEET SMELL, A SACRIFICE ACCEPTABLE, WELL PLEASING TO GOD. BUT MY GOD SHALL SUPPLY ALL YOUR NEED ACCORDING TO HIS RICHES IN GLORY BY CHRIST JESUS. NOW UNTO GOD AND OUR FATHER BE GLORY FOR EVER AND EVER. AMEN. SALUTE EVERY SAINT IN CHRIST JESUS. THE BRETHREN OF WHICH ARE WITH ME GREET YOU. ALL THE SAINTS SALUTE YOU, CHIEFLY THEY THAT ARE OF CÆSAR'S HOUSEHOLD. THE GRACE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST BE WITH YOU ALL. AMEN."—*Phil.* iv. 18-23.

THE preceding five verses exhibited, as we saw in our last article, "man in model aspects." There he appears as *an object of Christian beneficence, as a subject to providential vicissitudes, and as a genuine moral reformer.* Under the first heading we should have added to the three sub-divisions another, viz., that he, the man in model aspects, *received their beneficence with complete satisfaction.* This is expressed in the first clause of verse 18. "I have all and abound." In these concluding words of the epistle the following points strike us as worthy of note—

I.—GENUINE HUMAN GRATI-

TUDE A SERVICE ACCEPTABLE TO GOD. The beneficence of the Philippians had filled Paul with the spirit of gratitude, and this spirit of gratitude to them he regards as an acceptable offering to the Giver of all good. Propitiatory sacrifices are an abomination to the Infinite Father, the eucharistic is the acceptable oblation. Hence we are told "to do good and communicate; forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." The only true priesthood on earth is the priesthood that offers up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God in Jesus Christ. The man, therefore, whoever he

may be and wherever he may be, who breathes out to Heaven genuine thanksgiving for all the favours he receives from all sources, is the true priest of God. His offering ascends as "an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God." As the chalice of the summer flower keeps its face turned to the sun, and all its emitting odours seem to go forth as a sacrifice to the great orb of day, so does the truly grateful heart turn itself to Heaven, and send out in all its respirations the spirit of true praise. The true man is the true priest and none other. Another point worthy of note in these verses is—

II.—THE NEEDS OF CHRISTLY MEN ABUNDANTLY SUPPLIED. "But (and) my God shall supply all your need (fulfil every need of yours) according to His riches in glory in (by) Christ Jesus." Notice—

First: The *source* of the supply. "My God." "The expression," says Dr. Barry, "is emphatic. St. Paul had accepted the offerings as made not to himself but to the God whose servant he was, hence he adds, my God, whom ye

serve when serving me." He is the Father of lights, from whom all blessings flow; "the Giver of every perfect gift"; the primal, boundless, ever outwelling Font of all good. Notice—

Secondly: The *extent* of the supply. "All your need." All needs of all kinds, under all circumstances, in all scenes, worlds, and ages. What will be the needs of even *one* soul through all the future periods of his being? Whatever they are God will supply them. Notice—

Thirdly: The *measure* of the supply. "According to His riches in glory." "In glory." What does this mean? Does glory stand as the symbol of Himself and His immeasurable possessions? If so, what a source of supply. We read of the "unsearchable riches of Christ," &c. Notice—

Fourthly: The *condition* of the supply. "By Christ Jesus, or "in Christ Jesus." All the supplies depend upon being *in* Christ Jesus, in His character, in His spirit, in His purposes and aims. He who is in this state, we are assured, will have all things. "All things are yours, and ye are Christ's, and

Christ is God's." Another point worthy of note in these verses is—

III.—THE OBJECT OF THE SUPREME WORSHIP OF ALL ONE AND ONLY ONE. "Now unto God (our God) and our Father be glory (the glory) for ever and ever." Or, "unto the ages of the ages." God as a Father alone becomes intelligible to us, attractive to us, spiritually transformative to us. Transporting thought! Our Father, God, is to be worshipped by all, and to be worshipped by all "for ever and ever." Another noteworthy point is—

IV.—CHRISTLY LOVE EMBRACING ALL DISCIPLES EVERYWHERE. "Salute every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren which are with me greet (salute) you. All the saints salute you, chiefly (especially) they that are of Cæsar's household," In this salutation, which is short, we have no names mentioned. The apostle does not give the names of the men amongst the brethren which are with him, nor the names of those who are of "Cæsar's household." Perhaps they were too numerous to catalogue. The household of

Cæsar it would seem included a multitude of persons of all ages, ranks, and occupations. But the mention of names is of little importance. Paul's language is an assurance that they all loved one another, whether old or young, rich or poor, masters or servants, bond or free. True Christian, brotherly love cares nothing for names, positions, circumstances; its regard is for man as man, as a disciple of Christ. Its language is, "Grace be with all them that love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and truth." The other noteworthy point in these verses is—

V.—THE POSSESSION OF CHRIST'S FAVOUR THE SUPREME WISH OF TRUE PHILANTHROPY. "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all (your spirit)." A mere worldly philanthropy at most seeks only the temporal and intellectual interests of man, as a citizen of time, without reference to the inner spirit and the unbounded future. But true philanthropy has a far sublimer wish, it is that the favour of Christ may be ever with the spirit.

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Seedlings.

Homiletic Glances at Psalm cxix.

BY REV. DAVID THOMAS, D.D.

A Picture of a Sad Life.

"I AM BECOME LIKE A BOTTLE IN THE SMOKE."—*Ps. cxix. 83.*

I.—Here is a SHRIVELLED life. The empty leathern bottles, hung up in the unchimneyed houses of the East, get shrivelled in the heat. Like these bottles there are human lives. (1) They become shrivelled in their *thoughts*. There is nothing broad or elastic in their conceptions, their whole mental natures run into a few miserable smoky dogmas. (2) They become shrivelled in their *sympathies*. Their sympathies get confined to self and sect, there are no shoots of living sympathy for others going forth. Narrow thinkings and selfish habits contract the soul that should expand into a seraph into a miserable grub.

II.—Here is an UNLOVELY life. A shrivelled leathern bottle, black with smoke, has nothing in it to admire, nothing to charm the eye or even to invite the touch. Unlovely lives are by no means uncommon. The lives of the

drunkard, the debauchee, the voluptuary, the pampered sensualist, are hideous enough. So are the lives of intolerant bigots and canting religionists, &c., &c.

III.—Here is a USELESS life. So long as the bottle is hung up, shrivelled and black in the smoky apartment, it is of no service whatever. Alas, how many useless lives there are. What millions there are of every generation who have been of no service to the universe; nay, the universe would have shone brighter and poured forth more music had they never been. *Addison* says, that in the school of Pythagoras it was a point of discipline that if among the *akonstikoi*, or probationers, there were any who grew weary of studying to be useful, and returned to an idle life, they were to regard them as dead; and upon their departing, to perform their obsequies and raise them tombs with inscriptions to warn others of the like mortality and quicken them to refine their souls above that wretched state.

A Suggestive Question.

"HOW MANY ARE THE DAYS OF
THY SERVANT?"—*Ps. cxix. 84.*

THIS question implies—

I.—GOD'S KNOWLEDGE OF THE
LENGTH OF MAN'S LIFE. "*How
many are the days?*" He has
given to every man an appointed
time, so many years, days, weeks,
months. To Him there are no
accidental deaths, no premature
graves, all fixed. The question
implies—

II.—MAN'S IGNORANCE OF THE
LENGTH OF HIS LIFE. "In such
an hour as ye think not the Son
of Man cometh."

First: This ignorance indicates
the *goodness of God*. Were man
to know the exact time when he
should quit this scene of life, it
would paralyse his energies and
check his enjoyments. It would
mantle his days with depressing
gloom.

Secondly: This ignorance indi-
cates the *duty of man*. He should
be always ready, awaiting his
summons. Like a vessel with
anchors raised and sails hoisted
to catch the first breeze. The
question implies—

III.—THE TRYING ELEMENT IN
MAN'S LIFE. "*How many are the
days?*" As if the writer had
said, I am wearied. Let a man's
life be ever so propitious, the
time comes on when he gets tired
of it. "I loathe life," said Job,

"I would not live always." The
weight of years, the departure of
old friends, the narrowing of the
region of hope, the want of purpose,
not only reconcile him to his fate,
but create in him a craving for
the long rest of the long, long
grave. "I do not wish to die,"
says *Cicero*, "but I care not if I
were dead." A man's willingness
to die is no proof of his religion.

"First our pleasures die—and then
Our hopes and then our fears—and
when
These are dead, the debt is due,
Dust claims dust—and we die too."
SHELLEY.

"To our graves," says *Alexander
Smith*, "we walk in the thick
footprints of departed men."

God's Word More Settled than the Ordinances of Nature.

"FOR EVER, O LORD, THY
WORD IS SETTLED IN HEAVEN."
—*Psalms cxix. 89.*

(1) The Divine Word is settled
in the ordinances of nature. All
things move in an unbroken order.

(2) God's Word is settled in
the consciousness of intelligence.
It rules them.

(3) God's Word is settled in
the mind of God Himself. He is
immutable, He never deviates
from His Word. His Word is
even more settled than the or-
dinances of nature.

I.—IT IS POSSIBLE FOR GOD TO ALTER THE LAWS OF NATURE. He can reverse the course of the planets, alter the movements of oceans and the law of storms. But it is not possible for Him to alter His Word. "It is impossible for God to lie."

II.—GOD HAS INTERFERED WITH THE OPERATIONS OF NATURE. He has made planets stop, piled up the rivers, divided seas, raised the dead, &c., but has never deviated from His Word. What He has said has always come to pass. A deviation from God's Word would be more hazardous than deviations from the laws of nature. God could reverse the laws of nature without any harm to His moral universe, but were He to deviate from His Word, His moral kingdom would be rent to pieces. Trust in Him, which binds the whole in harmony, would be destroyed, and all would be anarchy and ruin.

God the Owner and Saviour of Man.

"I AM THINE, SAVE ME."—*Psalm* cxix. 94.

I.—God the OWNER of man. "*I am Thine.*"

First: All men are His by necessity. "All souls are Mine, the soul of the father, and the son," &c. We are His absolutely, indefeasibly, and for ever. We

are not the proprietors but the trustees of our existence.

Secondly: All good men are His by consecration. "Into Thine hands I commit my spirit." This surrender is man's primary duty, the one act necessary to give moral worth and acceptance to all acts in life.

II.—God the SAVIOUR of man. "*Save me.*" Save me—

First: From *practically ignoring* Thy claims.

Secondly: From *acting inconsistently* with Thy claims. Let us live as stewards who must at last give an account of ourselves.

The Only Path to the Highest Wisdom.

"I HAVE MORE UNDERSTANDING THAN ALL MY TEACHERS: FOR THY TESTIMONIES ARE MY MEDITATION. I UNDERSTAND MORE THAN THE ANCIENTS, BECAUSE I KEEP THY PRECEPTS."—*Psalm* cxix. 99, 100.

How is that wisdom to be obtained which transcends the wisdom of all the secular sages of the past or the present?

I.—By MEDITATION on the Divine. "*Thy testimonies are my meditation.*" It is characteristic of man that he has at once the meditative faculty and the meditating instinct. Thus out of his impressions he evolves thoughts and constructs systems. It is by

meditation alone that men become philosophers and artists; by it they penetrate the veil of phenomena, descry and grasp the eternal principles that govern the universe. By it alone we can get mental nourishment. From the impressions that are made upon us, the observations we make, and the thoughts that flash through us from the works we read. It is the digestive faculty of the soul. As the best food taken into the stomach is not only useless, but injurious to the system if not digested, so the richest information rather encumbers than strengthens the soul if not reflected upon.

But the subject of meditation must be Divine in order to reach the highest wisdom. "*Thy testimonies.*" Meditation upon human history, speculation, or enterprise, will conduct to a certain kind of wisdom, but not to the highest wisdom—the wisdom that cometh from on high. The other step in the path to the highest wisdom is—

II.—By PRACTISING the Divine. "*I understand more than the ancients, because I keep Thy precepts.*" "If any man do My will he shall know My doctrine." It is only as a man translates his ideas into actions that they become part of himself. The greatest ideas of God are comparatively worthless unless embodied in life.

In temporal matters the highest philosophy helps on the world just as its theories are reduced to practice. "Genuine work alone," says *Carlyle*, "what thou workest faithfully, that is eternal as the Almighty Founder and World Builder Himself."

"Thine to work as well as pray,
Clearing thorny wrongs away,
Plucking up the weeds of sin,
Letting heaven's warm sunshine in."
WHITTIER.

Human Life.

"THY WORD IS A LAMP UNTO MY FEET, AND A LIGHT UNTO MY PATH."—*Psalm cxix.* 105.

THREE thoughts are here suggested concerning human life.

I.—It is a WALK. "*My path.*" In this walk—

First: There is no *pausing*. We cannot rest or halt, at home, abroad, in society, or in solitude, asleep or awake, we are moving on this path and cannot stop a moment. "Every beating pulse we tell, leaves but the number less."

Secondly: There is no *returning*. We cannot retrace one step. The circumstances through which we passed yesterday we have left behind, they will recur no more but in memory. Every step takes us into the new and unknown.

II.—It is a walk REQUIRING LIGHT. The path of our life is

not only very intricate, but, morally, very dark. Black clouds of ignorance, sensuality, and superstition obstruct the rays of Sun and stars.

Under skies all hung in darkness,
On a road inspiring dread,
Down with ever deepening sadness,
We are going to the dead.

III.—It is a walk FOR WHICH LIGHT IS PROVIDED. “*Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.*” The Divine Word

not only throws its radiance on the heavens above, revealing the Infinite, but down on our very feet, showing what the next safe step should be. Even a lamp, if held too high in the dark, will prove useless and even misleading; it must come down to our feet, and light us in every step we take.

Through the desert we are marching,
Father, take us by the hand, [ing
We have search'd and still are search-
For some better, happier land.

Days of the Christian Year.

Matthew xxii. 11.

(*Twentieth Sunday after Trinity.*)

“AND WHEN THE KING CAME IN TO SEE THE GUESTS, HE SAW THERE A MAN WHO HAD NOT ON A WEDDING GARMENT.”

To whatever ancient custom reference is here made, the significance of the allusion is perfectly plain. The wedding garment was the indispensable thing; to be uninvested with which was to be fatally unready. When, however, we consider what, in the spiritual kingdom of Christ, this “wedding garment” really *is*, we have to decide between many suppositions. I think that if we take the whole strain and teaching of our New Testament into account, we shall conclude that it is found—

I.—NOT IN THE ACCEPTANCE OF ANY CHRISTIAN CREED. We are told that “whoso wishes to be saved” must believe a string of humanly drafted propositions. Such a requirement would certainly exclude the apostles of our Lord, to whom such philosophical conceptions of Divine truth were quite unfamiliar.

II.—NOT IN MEMBERSHIP OF ANY CHRISTIAN CHURCH. It is quite conceivable that a Christian man may be placed in circumstances under which he could not possibly be associated with a company of believers: yet he might be an excellent and honourable citizen of the kingdom notwithstanding.

III.—NOT IN SUBMISSION TO ANY CHRISTIAN CEREMONIES. It

is historically certain, and it is plain to our daily observation that multitudes of souls have passed under Christian ceremonies and have remained far from God and Heaven: and that, on the other hand, multitudes have failed to undergo these rites and have been renewed in the spirit of their mind, have become the servants of Christ and heirs of God. *This* is not the criterion.

IV.—NOT IN CONFORMITY TO A CHRISTIAN CODE. The pressure of outward and earthly influences may suffice to keep a man's behaviour within the enclosure of moral precepts, but he may be utterly destitute of "the grace of God," of all real reverence, and of the spirit of Christ: on the other hand, a man may be rendering a very halting and stumbling obedience, but it may be in his heart to please and honour Christ, and he may be struggling nobly against sin, and this man is in the path of life, well on his way to the city of God. We find the wedding garment—

V.—IN LIVING UNION WITH THE LORD HIMSELF; in a personal, spiritual association with Jesus Christ. The Divine Master strongly insisted on this in His teaching recorded in John vi., "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man," &c. And again in John xv. 1-4. Paul was earnestly

and above all things desirous of being found "in Christ." (Phil. iii.) John wrote on this subject in the spirit and in the terms in which his Master had spoken. (1 John ii. 28.) Peter declares that "who-soever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins." We may phrase it in many ways, whether in the language of Scripture, or in our own, but the essential thing, with which we may hope to find admission, without which we may well fear exclusion, is *a living union with Jesus Christ Himself*: that faith in Him to which true penitence leads, and from which the various graces of the Spirit spring. The cordial acceptance by the seeking soul of Jesus Christ, as Saviour, Lord, Friend; the "putting on of Christ" by the unsheltered spirit of man: this is to have on the wedding garment, to be prepared to sit down, not only without challenge but with hearty welcome from the King, at the Father's table in the heavenly home.

WILLIAM CLARKSON, B.A.
BRISTOL.

John iv. 47-50.

(*Twenty-first Sunday after Trinity.*)

IN the record of this touching instance of parental love and Divine deliverance we may find illustrations of—

I.—THE MITIGATIONS OF HUMAN ILL. (verse 47.) It is a sad day for any household when disease crosses the threshold and strikes down one of its members. But when this does happen how does it call forth all slumbering, and, it may be, unsuspected goodness! Severity disappears from deed and word, the step is lightened and the voice is hushed, the coming want is cared for before it is felt, ingenuity is busy to discover relief and restoratives, any sacrifice is made if it is likely to chase fever from the blood and bring back strength and health to the stricken frame. It is worth while to suffer in order to know the depth and strength of unrevealed affection.

II.—THE DISCOURAGEMENTS OF DEVOTEDNESS. (verse 48.) I believe these words of our Lord were intended for the people about Him, rather than for the interceding father: however this may be, it is clear that our Lord was oppressed with the demand that was made upon Him for striking manifestations of Divine power. He deplored the lack of higher appreciation, the want of spiritual discernment. This is a source of keen regret to those who now seek to tread in His steps and work as He wrought. When these teachers see the people forsaking what is solid and true, what is deeper and

worthier and more enduring, for that which is startling and sensational, they may remember that they stand in the same rank with their Master, and enter into His holy and elevated sorrow.

III.—THE IMPORTUNITY OF AFFECTION. (verse 49.) Parental affection here interposes; it makes bold to disregard this matter, however urgent it might seem to the Great Healer; it renews its appeal in fervent tones and energetic terms. Love will not be denied: it prays and does not faint: it beseeches again and yet again. If we have a large measure of it in our hearts we shall be not only earnest but importunate, making renewed appeals to men for Christ, to Christ for men.

IV.—THE EXIGENCY OF IMPERILLED LIFE. "Come down ere my child die." As if he had said—"These things may be important enough but they can wait until the life of my child is assured: that is the one supreme and imperative consideration." Thus we feel now when we see a human life at stake which may possibly be rescued. But if we saw things in their true proportions, how anxious, how agitated should we be, how strenuous would be our activity when we beheld, as, alas! we so often do, the inner, the real, the eternal life of the spirit seriously imperilled.

V.—THE DIVINE RESPONSE TO PERSISTENT EARNESTNESS. (verse 50.) To those who earnestly plead and patiently pursue their path, whether by inquiry, intercession, or endeavour, He gives their heart's desire.

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Daniel xii. 13.

(*Twenty-second Sunday after Trinity.*)

THE cry: "Oh, my Lord, what shall the end of these things be?" is often wrung from the lips of the sufferer about his pains, the friend about the woes of friends, the patriot about the turmoils of his country, the philanthropist about the state of the world. Remembering this, we are anxious to fasten attention upon the great principle this passage opens up, rather than to affix any special date to the fulfilment of the prophecy. We are led to reflect upon—

I.—THE BEWILDERMENT OF GOOD MEN CONCERNING THE FUTURE. As we have already hinted, there is frequently this bewilderment (1) *about the future of the world*. How shall Christianity conquer Heathendom? How shall conventional Christianity be purged from Heathenism? To what is the world hastening as it "spins down the grooves of

change?" So also about (2) *the future of individuals*. Recalling the unexpected events in our own past, and the surprises we have seen in the biographies of others, what may not befall us? We are led to reflect upon—

II.—THE EPOCH WHEN THIS BEWILDERMENT WILL TERMINATE. The "end" will come. This is (1) *the anticipation of universal conscience*. (2) *The prediction of Scripture*. (3) *The necessity of the present state of things*. Chaos cries out for cosmos, as winter does for spring. This "end" may come to the individual at death, to the race at the great "day of the Lord."

III.—THE DUTY OF GOOD MEN WITH REGARD TO THAT EPOCH. There is not only (1) *hopeful expectation* of it, though that is clearly taught; but (2) *progress* towards it. "Go thy way;" not simply drift through the time-spaces that intervene before it is reached, but actively and earnestly pursue a right course which shall prepare for its approach. What Moses said to the nation, "Go forward," and Jesus to the disciple, "Follow thou Me," is surely implied in Daniel's direction, "Go thou thy way." We are led to reflect upon—

IV.—THE DESTINY OF GOOD MEN AT THAT EPOCH. (1) *Personal existence* is implied. "Thou shalt

stand in *thy* lot. (2) *Right condition* is assured, "*thy lot.*" (3) *Perfect blessedness* is promised. "Thou shalt *rest.*" With such a prediction the good man is fortified for all the pilgrimage, battles, storms, that are his present experience. EDITOR.

Philippians iii. 18.

(*Twenty-third Sunday after Trinity.*)

To Paul, "the cross of Christ" was no mere religious catchword as it often has been since. It was the summing up of all that was grandest and sacredest to him in his knowledge of Jesus. Through these words, as through a focus, all the light of Christ's doctrine, life, death, distinctly shone in upon his mind and heart. The cross of Christ is the symbol of the entire religion of the Lord Jesus Christ. The apostle is here speaking of those who are the foes of Christ and the opponents of His religion, as "the enemies of the cross of Christ." Who may be included in such a description?

I.—THOSE WHO TEACH ERRORS CONCERNING CHRIST AND HIS RELIGION ARE ENEMIES. It seems clear that those who were teaching errors in his day, *e.g.*, Judaizers who, as Bishop Lightfoot says, deny the efficacy of the cross, and

substitute obedience to a formal code, were in Paul's mind, both in this letter and in that to the Galatians. The modern Judaizers or errorists, who are "enemies of the cross of Christ," may be (1) such as *ignore* doctrine concerning the cross altogether (as though astronomers ignored the suns of the systems they described), or (2) such as *misinterpret* the true meaning of the cross. Nevertheless, it was wisely said by the late Samuel Martin, "The cross of Christ, for effect, needs no more doctrine than God Himself has revealed, and it is effectual even without that doctrine. The epistles were written after the day of Pentecost, and some of the doctrines taught there were unknown to the apostles when they began to preach."

II.—THOSE WHO LIVE OPENLY IRRELIGIOUS LIVES are "enemies of the cross of Christ." The cross of Christ is the cause of *stainless purity*, of *unflinching courage*, of *unswerving truthfulness*, of *utter self-sacrifice*, and so every life that is impure, that is craven, that is false, that is selfish, is the life of an enemy of that cross. Unspeakably more deadly foes of that cross are those who lead immoral lives, than those who only promulgate heretical arguments. The life of every ungodly man raises the shout about Christ,

"Away with Him; crucify Him." The fierce battallions of the foes of the Holy Jesus have for their rank and file, the worldling, the tempter, the liar, the profligate. The heathen of London and of Africa alike are enemies of all the patience, the holiness, the love of which "the cross of Christ" is the perfect symbol.

III.—ALL FALSE PROFESSORS OF THE RELIGION OF JESUS "are

enemies of the cross of Christ." Few foes are so dangerous as traitors; no enemies of the cross so deadly as hypocrites. To profess allegiance that is not felt, love that is not cherished, faith that is not held, is to prostitute the badge of the Lord to the service of the devil himself. Over all enemies of the cross Paul wept; so may we. "Weep for yourselves." EDITOR.

The Future the Harvest of the Past.

"WHATSOEVER A MAN SOWETH THAT SHALL HE ALSO REAP."—*Galatians* vi. 7.

OCTOBER yields the harvest of the spring. So the Future is the Harvest of the Past.

I.—Because in every future THE APPARENT RISES OUT OF THE HIDDEN. The long buried seed corn broke the sod and reached at last complete manifestation. So it is with motive purposes,—faith which eventually character reveals. They have often been sacrificially hidden; there have been struggles in the dark, unrecognised toil, unseen self restraint, battles in solitude of soul, prayers in secret. "That which thou sowest is not quickened except it die." Whether it be good or ill, all that is now in the soil of the soul will in some future, nearer or more remote, be sheaves on its surface, unmistakable and distinct.

II.—Because LIKE GROWS FROM LIKE. Of the same species as the seed sown will be the fruit. Frivolous, flippant youth produces hollow, trashy manhood; and so on. Moral hemlock never yields moral wheat. "They that plough iniquity and sow wickedness reap even the same."

III.—Because MUCH COMES FROM LITTLE. Increase is the genius of harvest. "There shall be a handful of corn," &c. It is also thus (1) *With the reception of truth in the mind.* E.g., the impression of the fall of an apple in Newton's mind; the harvest the formulating of the law of gravitation. (2) *Development of character.* The beginnings of the Divine life in man are like the corn-fields in April; the maturity of that life—say in such as Paul—transcends in beauty and worth the richest harvests of golden grain. EDITOR.

Breviaries.

The Activity of God.

“WHATSOEVER THE LORD PLEASED, THAT DID HE IN HEAVEN, AND IN EARTH, IN THE SEAS, AND ALL DEEP PLACES.”—*Psalm cxxxv. 6.*

I.—God ACTS. He is not an impassive existence. He never has been, never can be inactive. He is the great worker,—never resting, never failing, never wearying,—the worker of all workers, the motor in all motions. II.—God acts EVERYWHERE. “*In the heaven, in the earth, in the seas, and in all deep places.*” In the heavens He rolls the massive orbs of space; on the earth He maketh the grass to grow and clotheth the earth with verdure. In the sea He rocks mighty oceans to and fro—they ebb and flow by His impulse. He acts everywhere. III.—God acts FROM and FOR HIMSELF.—“*Whatsoever the Lord pleased that did He.*” First: *From* Himself. Our activity is often excited and controlled by something external to ourselves. His never. Nothing *ab extra*. No ruling principles or persons, not all the hierarchies of intelligences, nor the rushing forces and forms of universal matter can excite Him. His action is that of absolute spontaneity. He is responsible to no one. He acts, Secondly: *For* Himself. “*Whatsoever the Lord pleased.*” There is no other reason for His activity but what pleases Him. The chief pleasure of any moral intelligence is the gratification of his predominant disposition. In God this is LOVE. Hence His pleasure in creating the universe and sustaining it is the diffusion of His own happiness. His pleasure is the pleasure of His creatures; His happiness and theirs are identical.

LONDON.

DAVID THOMAS, D.D.

The Eternity of the Divine Character.

“THY NAME, O LORD, ENDURETH FOR EVER.”—*Psalm cxxxv. 13.*

GOD’S “*name*” is His moral character, and here we are told His name “*endureth for ever.*” Two remarks are suggested. I.—MORAL CHARACTER CANNOT BE ETERNAL BY ABSOLUTE NECESSITY. The moral character of a being implies freedom of action, and the existence of a power to become morally otherwise. Can he who is virtuous by necessity be

virtuous at all? When God's character is said to be eternal, are we to suppose that He could not alter or utterly abandon it? If so, He lacks the power He has given to His moral creatures, for on all hands we see them change their moral characters. Millions, as in the case of fallen angels, have renounced the good for the bad; and millions, as in the case of redeemed saints, have renounced the bad for the good. Certainly it appears a stupendously awful supposition that the Infinitely Good has the power to become infinitely evil. And yet without this power wherein is His moral praiseworthiness? II.—MORAL CHARACTER IF GOOD THE MORE LASTING THE BETTER. Good moral characters on this earth are its "salt," its "light," &c. The wealth of a Cræsus, the power of a Cæsar, are contemptible compared to a *good moral character*. God's moral character is perfect, perfect in purity, in love, in truthfulness, and justice. Hence its eternity is to be rejoiced in. Hallelujah! At the head of the universe there will never be the malign, the impure, the tyrannic, or the unjust.

LONDON.

DAVID THOMAS, D.D.

Paul at Athens.

"NOW WHILE PAUL WAITED FOR THEM AT ATHENS, HIS SPIRIT WAS STIRRED IN HIM, WHEN HE SAW THE CITY WHOLLY GIVEN TO IDOLATRY. THEREFORE DISPUTED HE IN THE SYNAGOGUE WITH THE JEWS, AND WITH THE DEVOUT PERSONS, AND IN THE MARKET DAILY WITH THEM THAT MET WITH HIM," &c.—*Acts* xvii. 16-20.

PAUL now in the metropolis of intellect and culture. How he happened to be there as a brief sojourner. As a Christian apostle and as a Christian man could not regard with an easy indifference these Athenians. I.—FEELING WHICH OVERMASTERS EVERY OTHER IS CONCERN FOR THEIR SPIRITUAL CONDITION AND PROSPECTS. Describe—so very much to interest at every step from the Piræus in the streets and squares of the city, which was the "eye of Greece, and the light of the civilized world." Nor can we suppose that one Tarsus-born, a Roman citizen albeit a Jew, of great and profound learning, would be indifferent to the beauties of architecture, painting, and sculpture; to art, literature, and philosophy! But "full of idols"! This stirred his soul to a paroxysm. A great and renowned city, with its tens of thousands of dwellers, given up to vanity, frivolity, scepticism, and superstition! Each soul so precious—each so capacious—each immortal! Living amid so much to charm; natural beauty, clear and sunny skies, glorious treasures, marvels of art, almost breathing statues,

stately temples, countless altars, &c.,—yet without God, without Christ, without hope. II.—CLUE TO THE THEME OF HIS FREQUENT DISCOURSE. Sought out such as would be most in sympathy with him, most likely to comprehend his teaching; and so, through the few most sympathetic influence the many wholly without sympathy with or ready understanding of his words and doctrines. Hence the Synagogue—the Agora or Forum, adorned with its *stoá poikile*, and wondrous temples, were the theatres of his discourse. JESUS and the RESURRECTION. Great, potent facts! He told them more in five minutes than they had been able to discover in five hundred years. [1 Cor. xv. witnesses in what manner Paul could discourse on Jesus and the resurrection.] Note the utterances on Areopagus, &c. III.—HOW THESE EXPRESSIONS OF DEEP CONCERN WERE MET. Shouts of derisive laughter had met preachers at Pentecost,—“These men are full of new wine;” so here, like shouts echoed amid the columns of the porch and temples of the Agora. But they did not all mock. One or two named, a few others nameless here but named on high believed, and by their faith rejoiced Paul’s heart. [Insist on the vanity of even the highest culture without Christ.]

FARE FAC.

Christian Faithfulness.

“BE THOU FAITHFUL.”—*Rev. ii. 10.*

I.—The NATURE of the appeal: “Be faithful.” Faithfulness is (1) *due to Christ*; (2) *possible to all*; (3) *all-pervasive*. II.—The RANGE of the appeal: “*Be thou faithful unto death.*” Faith should be (1) *superior to circumstances*,—“Tribulation;” “Death.” (2) *Independent of others*: “thou.” (3) *Of life-long duration*: “unto death.” III.—The ENFORCEMENT of the appeal: “I will give thee,” &c. There is another sphere of life, with reality and splendour of reward, and the reward itself will be—(1) *Appropriate*, in character: Faithfulness crowned; “death”—“life.” (2) *Personal*, in enjoyment: “I will give thee.” (3) *Certain*, in attainment; because (a) gratuitous in its vouchsafement: “give;” and (b) definite in its promise: “I will.” The Lord Jesus says: “I” will give thee. What honour, joy, and certitude. “BE FAITHFUL.” Read the story of the three Hebrew youths. Study the life of the Lord Jesus. Remember Polycarp, probably the angel of the church here addressed, and his answer to the Roman pro-consul. Forget not the long line of the martyrs, and the faithful. The reward is nearing; and the welcome—“Well done, good and faithful servant.”

J. P. A.

Memorial Names.

“AND UNTO JOSEPH WERE BORN TWO SONS BEFORE THE YEARS OF FAMINE CAME, WHICH ASENATH THE DAUGHTER OF POTI-PHERAH PRIEST OF ON BARE UNTO HIM. AND JOSEPH CALLED THE NAME OF THE FIRST-BORN MANASSEH (i.e., *forgetting*): FOR GOD, SAID HE, HATH MADE ME FORGET ALL MY TOIL, AND ALL MY FATHER’S HOUSE. AND THE NAME OF THE SECOND CALLED HE EPHRAIM (i.e., *fruitful*): FOR GOD HATH CAUSED ME TO BE FRUITFUL IN THE LAND OF MY AFFLICTION.”—*Genesis* xli. 50-52.

CONSIDER, I.—GOD’S KINDNESS TO JOSEPH. (1) *A blessed oblivion.* (a) “He hath made me forget *all my toil*,”—all his bitter sufferings as a slave, and all the tremendous labour which had suddenly devolved upon him (an untried man) in the administration of Egypt. No trouble was allowed to root itself in his heart. God dwelt with him and kept his nature fresh and buoyant. In like manner God deals with His people now. (b) “He hath made me forget . . . *all my father’s house*.” The light of the past was hidden by the superior light of the present, for unto Joseph had been given a sweet home of his own, which fully satisfied the yearnings of his heart. There were pleasant things in our past life, but God has graciously broken their charm by superior joys, lest they should attract us from behind, and so retard our movements heavenward. “Forgetting the things that are behind.” (2) *A rich fruitfulness.* “God hath caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction.” After much training Joseph was called to service; after much pruning he became “a fruitful bough, whose branches run over the wall.” Blessings prevailed on his behalf “unto the utmost bounds of the everlasting hills.” We, too, have gathered fruit in our Christian course, while before us a boundless harvest awaits our sickle. II.—JOSEPH’S GRATEFUL MEMORIAL OF GOD’S KINDNESS. His memorial was not like Jacob’s at Bethel, or the Israelites when they passed over Jordan—a heap of stones, a pillar built by man’s hands, but beautiful human lives. He wrote his gratitude in his children’s names, so that the record was always present in his home. Manasseh ever reminded him of God’s kindness in a blessed oblivion, and Ephraim of abounding fruitfulness. There was beautiful wisdom in that old Hebrew custom of recording God’s dealings in the names of children. It was of God, who Himself has given us the sublimest example in His own dear Son—“Thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins.” Have we any memorial of God’s kindness in our homes? We keep souvenirs of

our earthly friends ; we have precious relics of our departed ones ; surely, then, it is not too much to ask that we should have memorials of God to draw our thoughts and affections heavenward. Let us not record our gratitude in cipher, which none but ourselves can interpret ; let us write it so plainly that the world shall easily read it. Let us not forget that our Lord has given us a memorial of Himself in His holy supper—"This do in remembrance of Me." O turn not from that memorial of the Lord's kindness ; let it be our memorial as well as His. Nay, more, there is a memorial more constantly present with us than the supper of Jesus, it is the name we bear. We are *Christians*. This sacred badge reminds us that we are not our own. "Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity," and be holy, even as He is holy.

KINGSWOOD, BRISTOL.

JOSEPH WILLCOX.

The Disciples' Call and Response.

"FOLLOW ME."—*Luke v. 27.*

I.—THE CALL (1) *is the call of Christ.* He *sees* the individual. He *speaks*. He presents *Himself* : "Me." He takes the *initiative*. Our best impulses are the voice of Christ within. (2) *Is the call from the lower to the higher.* He calls us to companionship with Himself, and to spiritual service. (3) *Is a call addressed to men amid their secular pursuits.* It reaches men not only on the Sabbath, and in the sanctuary, but during the week, and at the toll-house. Thus, in every sphere, life is not devoid of solemnity. Men of business, have you never heard the voice ? II.—THE RESPONSE. (a) *Fact* of a response. (b) *Characteristics* of this response. (1) *Prompt* : "rose up." The obedience was immediate. Alas ! what procrastination and what pleas for delay exist to-day. (a) *Intellectual* difficulties. (b) *Spiritual* difficulties, unfitness, &c. (c) *Social* difficulties, claims of business, companions, &c. Let the simple question be : Has Christ called ? (2) *Uncalculating* : "left all." The sacrifice was (a) not inconsiderable in itself, (b) yet only apparent. He became a companion of Christ ; wrote the Gospel of His life ; and was numbered with the twelve. We ever receive far more than we surrender. (3) *Joyous*. Instead of regret at what he left, fear as to the future, or acting under a mere sense of duty, he made "a great feast." The unlikely may be reached and won, and a publican become an apostle.

DISCIPULUS.

Pulpit Handmaids.

MOSES AND DARWIN.

(GENESIS i. 1.)

It is sometimes asserted that the Bible was never intended to teach Science. No doubt its great purpose was the revelation of spiritual truths for the spiritual education of the race. But it is a great mistake to suppose that Moses and the true Scientist contradict each other. Though the Hebrew prophet was not a teacher of Science, he has in this first chapter given us the alphabet of Religious Science. The great principles of things were disclosed to him, the great outlines of the vast dramas of life were revealed to him, and in these verses he has given us a rapid and suggestive sketch of the great outlines of God's creative work. It was not for him to fill in the details, but to give hints and anticipations of the coming wisdom. His instructions were not incorrect, but incomplete, in order to meet the pupil's capacity. Just as the mother with the child in her lap prattles to it, so Moses taught the mere alphabet of Nature to the childhood of the world.

It has been asserted that the Bible discourages the knowledge of Nature. In Jerusalem a wise man appeared, who wrote a descriptive catalogue of natural history, and his religious training was no obstacle, but an impulse, to scientific labour. To Solomon the fear of the Lord was the beginning of wisdom. The rod of Moses and the staff of the prophets have not held back Science. Moses and the prophets would not have forbidden Galileo to search the heavens, which declare God's glory, nor would they have bound the commandments of the Lord as fetters around the advancing feet of that knowledge which is expected to increase when many shall run to and fro. In the books of the prophets the whole of Nature is reproduced. They used sun, moon, and stars, seas and rivers, mountains and plains, wind and rain, heat and cold, trees and plants, flowers and grass, fish and fowl, and

all the contents of nature as symbols of spiritual realities. God and scripture, man and nature, are all related. My discourse will have some reference to Charles Darwin, who but lately dropped the wand of Science in his 74th year. For forty years he had wielded that wand with magic power. He was, indeed, a great man. The civilized nations of the world have now vied with each other to do him honour, as the most wonderful creative genius of his age. With generous pride they have linked his name with those of Aristotle, Copernicus, Kepler, Cuvier, and Newton. When he began his scientific career, forty years ago, he was far in advance of his age, and he was assailed with the weapons of indignation and ridicule. But now, without accepting all his conclusions, the age has wonderfully come round to him, and accepted him as its scientific leader. Now look—

I.—AT THE HARMONY BETWEEN MOSES AND DARWIN.

(a) According to Moses, creation has its origin in God. *In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.* Some of our Materialistic scientists want us to give up this grand fact. Herbert Spencer says there never was a beginning of things, and he calls God the unknown power. Tyndall says: "Life never stirs within the glass cases of his experiments unless there is some life already there to stir." Haeckel seems to know almost everything about the beginning, as if he had been there. He saw no God there. In the beginning there was an atom of homogeneous matter—it stirred and became different from itself and it multiplied, and behold the earth and its beauty and fruit. At last this potential atom became man, and it began to think and dream of God; and so thought, love, conscience, and God came forth in succession from this magic atom. There is a story told of a Japanese magician who took a flower-pot, filled it with earth, put a seed in it, placed it on a table, and then commenced fanning it. Soon the earth was broken, and the plant appeared, and in a few minutes it grew before the spectators' eyes into a bush, which budded and blossomed, and then the performer plucked off the blossoms for the spectators. The Materialist has banished God, but he has put magic into his atom earth pot. There is no occult art in the process of Moses. His statement

is very simple and yet sublime. "In the beginning God created."

Darwin has gone down into the bowels of the earth, he has traced this globe to a nebulous light and pursued the molecules to their furthest point. But he has confessed that beyond there is a mystery which baffles all skill, and this mystery he calls God. According to him the material universe has a spiritual origin, and before and after each creation he would write the word "God." Indeed, the highest Science teaches us that the ultimate fact of the universe is not an atom, but the unseen Presence by whom all things consist—God is the spiritual ground of existence. Matter pressed to the utmost declares itself to be force. Force pressed to the utmost declares itself to be thought and will. Thought and will pressed to the utmost declare they are the breath of the Spirit of God. Dead as the ground seems, it is the home of mystery and the consolidation of race essence. It is more than dull matter. The races of wild flowers, the glories of our gardens, the juices of the fruit, the down of the peach, the plumage of the birds, the flesh and blood of animals, the brain of man, and the lips and eyes of woman, are derived from the ground. Matter is, indeed, palpable and visible, but none the less full of invisible wonders. It is full of spirit. It is God's creature.

(b) According to Moses, God's method of creation was by slow development. The world was not finished in six ordinary days; it was not suddenly thrown into existence, ready made, and fitted up with all the modern improvements. According to the Hebrew seer it was a progressive work. In Genesis ii. chap. 4th verse, it is said: "These are the generations [or growths] of the heavens and the earth when they were created."

There was a time when no life existed on the earth. No life was possible, owing to the material tumult and war of elements while the crust was forming. The earliest life was vegetable growth, which had no power of feeling. Living creatures could not live in the midst of storms, earthquakes, and volcanic outbursts. Then animals appeared on the scene. First the zoophyte and sea animals, then flying creatures in the air and amphibious

reptiles, and last of all the larger mammals. When all things were ready, man came forth as God's free moral agent and fellow-worker. The rude world was slowly matured for him into a garden. The lower forms of life were so many experiments leading up to him as the final, permanent shape. He is the crowning result of a long series of creations. The sacred poet has said of him what he has not said of other creatures, that God created him in His own image. There is an impassable gulf between the highest animal and the lowest man. In the verses of this chapter we have an ever ascending life—progress from lower forms and types to higher forms and types of life.

Evolution is the great faith of the scientific world to-day. It presides over all scientific thoughts and theories. It warns us against regarding existing things as though they were struck into being by sudden blows of creative power. It directs us to trace everywhere the processes of unfolding growth. It says, "The world is the slow fruit of ages, and not the manufacture of a day." But there are evolutionists and evolutionists. It is the watchword of the most gross Materialists, and also the guiding principle of many who are led by its clue through the mazes of visible phenomena out to the borders of the unseen and into the presence of the living God. According to mechanical evolutionists the great processes of creation are blind forces, building up the universe without intelligence; but according to Darwin and his *real* followers these processes are the methods of creative wisdom.

There is, then, no discord between Moses and Darwin. We may accept the theory of evolution without contradiction to our strong religious faith and hope. Nature was slow in coming to her present beauty. She will not stand still where she is. She is impatient to burst her old limits and laws. She stands on tip-toe, with wings expanded to transcend herself. She longs for transmutation, to wear the glory she had with God before she put on the garments of humiliation and suffering.

II.—THE GROUNDLESSNESS OF ALL FEARS FROM THE TEACHING OF TRUE SCIENCE.

(a) No honest criticism can destroy God's truth. It is as eternal as Himself. At the dawn of Science, the Bible was

subject to violent attacks. Young Scientists felt over-confident with their new learning, and were rude and impudent towards Christians. They confidently pointed to the supposed blunders of Moses, the cruel wars of the Jews, and discrepancies of the Evangelists. Ignorant theologians were terrified, and denounced all learning as Rationalism, and proclaimed war against Science. Timid Christians had a vague suspicion that there was alienation between advanced scholarship and the old fathers.

The present age is one of reconciliation between Science and Religion. Theologians are reviewing their interpretations of the Bible, and Scientists are holding a truce and making concessions. The future age will witness the blending of the lights of Nature and Revelation, and they will both reflect God's glory. New light may disturb old theologies, but it will burn up old traditions and disclose deeper and more precious truths. Just as a little warmth of the rising sun may call up the very mists which will be dissipated by its more powerful shining, so the vague mistrust created by criticism will be dispelled by the shedding abroad of a more powerful light. Old views may perish, because they are one-sided. God's truths will last for ever. The inspiration of the Bible, the Fatherhood of God, the Incarnation and Divinity of Jesus Christ, the Atonement by Christ's suffering, the Regeneration by the Holy Spirit,—these are truths which will survive the flames of all hostile criticism and science.

(b) Evolution does not banish God or design from Nature. Darwin's theory was a great shock to the religious world. When he expounded his theories, more than twenty years ago, religious men shrank from the pitiless facts to which he pointed. Those who believed themselves the sons of God, the image of the Creator, rejected his hard logic, which apparently substantiated their descent from brutes, perhaps from the worm on which they trod. They thought they saw their loving Father set aside, and a huge Moloch of wheels and engines of destruction put in His place. There would be no longer any trust in a kind Providence, for if God did exist He could not care for individuals. Our frail life is the sport of a soulless mechanism, and we exist because the hostile forces of Nature could not kill us. So these Christians

yearned for the old mystery of their origin and their old faith in a kind, present Father.

Evolution is defective. It may be a true cause without being a sole cause. It fails to explain many things. It cannot account for the gap between man and beast, free will, human genius, prophet inspiration, Christ and Christianity, and Divine Regeneration. A freak of Nature or natural selection cannot explain these new waves of life. In these sudden advances Nature seems to transcend herself. At any rate, evolution does not banish God from Nature.

God put the promise and potency of terrestrial life in the fervent haze of atoms, which composed the primitive nebula. He imprinted the secret pattern of things on the flaming winds of chaos. But He did not abandon creation. Christ said, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." The old theory said, "God worked by sudden leaps"; the new creed says, "God worked by slow development." The Creator is the cause, evolution is the process, and progress is the issue. The old prophets saw in all the changing elements of Nature the reign of an all-pervading law. But this law was to them the expression of one living and loving power. To them the heavens declared the glory of God, and the earth was full of His riches.

III.—LET US NOW BRIEFLY TURN TO THE LESSONS TO BE LEARNED FROM THE LIFE OF DARWIN.

(a) One great lesson is patience and perseverance in study. Soon after he left college it was his privilege to take a voyage round the world in the "Beagle," with a scientific crew. He then explored Nature in many parts of the world. He accumulated facts, but he took time to reflect upon them before he formed them into systems. He did not jump to speculative conclusions without evidence for every link in the chain of reasoning. His theories were not based upon crude fancies. Every step he took was a step of safety. He was not satisfied with a little light. He would toil on till it became a sun to guide him. All great work is slow work. It is slow in proportion to its greatness. The summer fly is born and dies in a day, but the more organized creature has a long youth and mature age. The little plant buds, blooms, and bears

fruit, and then perishes in a year; but the grand old oak tree requires centuries of wind and storm, sunshine and rain, to bring his fibres and solid trunk to perfection. The education of the mind is not accomplished by a sudden leap. It is the result of long and sharp discipline. Moral character is not an instantaneous creation. It is evolved through years, perhaps centuries, of self-denial and suffering, tears and joy, strong temptations and heavenly influences.

(b) Again, he loved Nature, and therefore could interpret her. Almost every order of living creatures attracted his thoughtful and loving consideration. Nothing in Nature was thought unworthy of his examination. With genuine enthusiasm he turned his microscope upon the nature and manners of sea slugs and cuttle fish, spiders and frogs, butterflies and birds, phosphorescent insects and earthworms. And all Nature was open to him. She kept few secrets from him. He did not need to spell out a word at a time like a blundering child. He could read right off God's writing without a moment's pause. The air, the light, the fields, the forests, the hills, the rivers, were all life to his life. In Nature he saw himself in great outline, and so he could interpret her as few are able to do. Nature must be loved to be known. She loves to court you, but shrinks from hasty marriage. When she finds that she has wholly won you, she will give herself to you, and tell you all her secrets. Christ sent His weary Disciples out to the fields of Nature to listen to the songs of birds and watch the play of colours in Nature's robe. He said, consider the lilies. Ponder their mystery and beauty.

(c) Again, he lived a simple, true, and loving life. He spent the last forty years of his life in a quiet country village in Kent. It is said that little children loved him, and ran to open gates for him when they saw him coming. They are true prophets, and know who can be trusted. His domestic servants revered him, and remained long with him—one was under his roof forty years. He had, indeed, a simple, generous nature. Alfred Wallace was a co-worker with him in the same field. They both reached the same conclusions about the same time. But they were friendly rivals. They never quarrelled about priority. Each was willing

to recognise the other's worth. Darwin's simple nature was incapable of jealousy, and it was a stranger to malevolence and revenge. For many years he suffered grossest calumny and misrepresentation, but he made no retort. He despised cheap and popular success. He felt firm on the ground of truth, and therefore could afford to wait.

Learn to look upon Nature as the symbol of God's kingdom. The ancient Egyptians regarded Nature with wonder and awe. They believed some Divine presence pervaded bulls, cows, hawks, crocodiles, and serpents. The Babylonians winged the statues of their lions, bulls, and horses. According to these nations, beasts had a celestial origin. To the prophets of the Old Testament, Nature was the hand-writing of God. A secret, vast, mystic meaning lay hidden in her forms and operations. The lion, ox, and eagle had their spiritual side. When the wise men came from the East to worship Christ, they found him in the place of the cattle. The loving soul will see some good under grotesque shapes.

Learn: Nature will not reveal herself to an unholy man. She is a spirit of holiness. Ruskin goes so far as to say that none but a pure man can be a pure artist. And another great lover and teacher of Nature insists upon it that the interpreter of Nature must be sincere and holy, for between a degraded, vicious man and Nature there can be no communion. Nature will not own him. Passions disturb the vision. His eyes are too foul to see into her secrets. She will not doff her veil in his presence. Because his heart is so gross she will not give him more than husks. Whenever she finds him alone, under her silent stars or by the river side, she will rebuke him, and make him feel that a great gulf lies between his muddy thoughts and her innocence and beauty. When he becomes an upright, chaste, and true man, she will take him by the hand and let her soul flow into his. When he becomes a pure, loving, unselfish man, he will find the corn fields, primroses, and lilies in beautiful accord with his spirit. When he becomes free from vice, folly, and passion, the very earth and heaven will draw near to him and embrace him, the woods will bid him welcome, and the flowers smile acquiescence. These prophets of Nature are right. Nature is pure. She is

casting out all impurity from herself. She will have her worshippers take off their dusty shoes from their feet when they come to her shrine.

We have spoken of Darwin as a great man and a simple, true man—an interpreter of Nature. But Darwin cannot be your saviour. None but Jesus can take away your sins. Christ alone can save you. Christ alone can give you eternal life. Human geniuses are local lamps, and shine with borrowed light. Christ is the light of all worlds. You must pass by Darwin and Nature up to Christ, who is the door to the kingdom of Heaven. May God help you!

CROYDON.

D. BLOOMFIELD JAMES.

“To matter or to force
The All is not confined;
Beside the law of things
Is set the law of mind;
One speaks in rock and star,
And one within the brain;
In unison at times
And then apart again;
And both in one have brought us hither,
That we may know our whence and whither.

“The sequences of Law,
We learn through mind alone;
'Tis only through the soul,
That aught we know is known;
With equal voice she tells
Of what we touch and see
Within the bounds of life,
And of a life to be,
Proclaiming One who brought us hither,
And holds the keys of whence and whither.”

—PALGRAVE

Suggestions for Science Parables.

All material Nature is but a parable of spiritual realities.

"Two worlds are our's, 'tis only sin
Forbids us to descry,
The mystic Earth and Heaven within,
Clear as the sea or sky."

MIGRATIONS OF INSECTS; DANGERS FROM WHAT IS MINUTE.

"Who hath despised the day of small things?"

"THE greatest depredators on our globe are not the huge bisons, the roar of which shakes the desert, nor the winged invaders which devastate our forests; they are the puny insects which Jehovah disperses over the earth to make manifest His power. Such is the wandering locust (*Aeriduum peregrinum*), one of the most terrible scourges of agriculture. In Africa and Asia it appears in such masses that when they are seen advancing at a distance they resemble immense black clouds, which intercept the solar rays and plunge the country in the most profound darkness; when they alight upon the ground they form a living sheet more than a foot thick, and when, worn out by fatigue, they pile themselves upon the trees, the branches bend and break under their weight. The entire track of these devouring insects seems to have been wasted by a fire; not a trace of verdure is seen on it. Human skill is inadequate to exorcise this pest. In vain do armies and peoples rise *en masse* to arrest these terrible devastators. One invasion of them, for instance, checked the passage of Charles XII's army, when he was crossing Bessarabia, and compelled him to arrest his march. And if death overtake these insects, their corpses, heaped up on the soil, exhale pestilential vapours; mortality succeeds to ruin, and men perish by thousands. St Jerome says, 'What is there stronger and more terrible than locusts? All human industry cannot withstand them. God alone regulates their march.'"—POUCHET.

Selected Acorns from a Stalwart Oak.

JAMES HINTON.

"The smallest living *acorn* is fit to be the parent of *oak-trees* without end."
—*Carlyle*.

HINTON'S WATCHWORD was "*others' needs*." Man's growing life, his redemption from death, that was the object of James Hinton's "constant passion of desire."

MATERIALISM.—"What is the world that science reveals to us as the reality of the world we see? A world dark as the grave, silent as a stone, and shaking like a jelly. *That* the ultimate fact of this glorious world? Why you might as well say that the ultimate fact of one of Beethoven's violin quartettes is the scraping of the tails of horses on the intestines of cats."

INTELLECTUAL AND MORAL GREATNESS COMPARED.—"It would be impossible for me to put intellectual and moral greatness on a par, because I think (metaphysically) that *the moral qualities appertain to a higher being*. And that is a useful opinion for me to hold, at any rate, for I am liable to temptation from intellectual sources—Most young men are."

MIRACLES.—"It is evident to me that the idea of a miracle *to us* must differ considerably from that which was entertained of it of old, merely by virtue of the great change in our ideas about things . . . A great gap has to be filled up here I fancy before we can enter at all into the thought of the people who spoke about miracles of old. I have a notion that *the miraculous power is the nature and natural power of man*, and that the absence of it is a degradation, not the possession of it an exaltation."

EMOTIONAL CURES (Physical).—"I am becoming more and more convinced of the reality and multitude of emotional cures. People won't hear of a feeling in the mind curing a disease, and so opinion oscillates from the extremity of credulity to that of scepticism."

JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH.—"'We are saved by faith.' All are '*made right*' by faith, that's being justified. Of course it makes a man right to believe in Christ, in the redemption by His blood. He can't keep wrong. In spite of himself he is taken and turned right round, sees everything just the opposite to what he thought."

BRISTOL CONGREGATIONAL INSTITUTE.

T. BROUGHTON KNIGHT.

Reviews.

THE GREAT TEACHER, His Style and Methods. A Conference Sermon.
By the Rev. RALPH FENWICK.

NO TEMPLE IN HEAVEN. By the Rev. RALPH FENWICK. London :
Primitive Methodist Book Depôt.

Many hundreds of Sermons have come to the Editor of *The Homilist's* table for notice, for greeting, for God speed. They have been the productions of men of every communion, of every rank in Church orders, of every variety of professional culture, natural genius, and Christian earnestness. It is not saying too much to put the two discourses now under review among the best that we have received. Their unconventional freshness, their thorough grasp of their themes, their distinctly practical aim, make them model sermons. Of course they contain some opinions from which we differ; this will always be so amongst honest thinkers, but the tone throughout is so true, the glow is so genuine, that we are thankful Mr. Fenwick is a recognised leader in one of the most vigorously Christly of our present-day Churches.

DR. MOFFAT; Lessons from his Life and Work. A Sermon by the Rev.
W. WALKER JUBB. Preached in the New Barnet Congregational
Church, London. London : Brickhill, Finsbury Street.

It is a great thing in the realm of sermonic utterance when the theme compels and inspires the preacher to "put on his strength." It was so in the discourse before us. There is not a feeble conception, nor a tame expression, nor a dull sentence from beginning to end. No wonder. For "Robert Moffat" is a theme that must captivate any nature capable of admiring simplicity of aim, devotion of life, grandeur of character. His life was a romance by the side of which the inventions of fiction are poor and jejune. The results of his life are victories by the side of which those of the proudest of the world's heroes pale and shrivel. Till a full biography of him appears, which we hope will be undertaken by some one who understands him as Stanley did Arnold, or Stopford Brooke, Frederick Robertson, we commend the wide circulation in all directions of this unusually complete memorial sermon.

THE SPIRIT'S MESSAGE TO THE CHURCHES; being Notes of a Sermon by Rev. WILLIAM CROSBIE, M.A., LL.B. Brighton: D. B. Friend, Western Road.

Those of our readers who recal Mr. Crosbie's Leading Homily in a recent number of *The Homilist* will know what to expect in this sermon. For, as is ever the case when the man is more than the mere preacher, Mr. Crosbie's sermons are not the spasmodic efforts of a mere rhetorician. They are ever, as this is, the sound, strong, brave message of an intelligent and spiritual man, whose manifold pastoral labours find the index of their motive and the crown of all their endeavours in his pulpit ministry. The key-note of that ministry we find in a sentence we take almost at random from this sermon of his, "Preach Christ—not metaphysical and propositional theologies—not sacraments and ceremonies—but *Christ*."

ILLUMINATED SCRIPTURE TEXTS; suited to the requirements of Sunday School and Church Work, and for Wall Decoration. London: William Mack, 4, Paternoster Square.

The specimens of these *Illuminated Scripture Texts*, which are around us as we write these lines, and others that from time to time have fastened our attention, leave nothing to be desired, either in the words selected, the variety of sizes and forms provided, or the exquisite artistic refinement and grace of the lettering. They are delicate or bold according to requirement, but are always distinct. The design and the colours employed fit these Illuminations to adorn the walls of any Church, or Chapel, or School, or Home. Why we should endure ugly dulness, and stare at blank walls that suggest no bright or sacred thought, but many that are in the opposite category, when there is such a copious provision from which, at so small a cost, we might secure such a different state of things, only prejudice, or lethargy, or meanness can explain.

THE SUNDAY MAGAZINE. Edited by Rev. BENJAMIN WAUGH. London: Isbister and Company, 56, Ludgate Hill.

We know of no periodical for the family for which we can bespeak a more cordial welcome than this. Under the control of its broad-minded and highly-gifted captain, Mr. Waugh—a man of rare genius and beautiful spirit—it traverses almost every sea of thought, and bears to our homes

a freight from almost every shore. The crew are worthy of the captain. Some of the most constantly conspicuous of them, such as Dr. Hugh Macmillan, and Revs. R. H. Smith, Mark Guy Pearse, J. G. Wood, are known to our readers as contributors to our own pages. They and their comrades do their occasional work as well as Mr. Waugh does his constant duty. And the result is that whether we are enquiring for wealth of varied information, about Nature, or Heroes, or Charities, or are listening for new strains of Song, or suggestive meditations on Scripture, or for the teachings of Fiction that shall be at once wise and winning, we shall find our wants met here. "The Sunday Evenings with the Children" reach a higher point of adaptedness, at once to interest, to instruct, and to inspire, than we know where else to seek. The Illustrations are by master hands. We are impelled to these words of emphatic eulogy simply because of our conviction that we shall be benefactors of all homes to which we are able to introduce this noble Sunday Magazine.

THE PULPIT TREASURY, conducted by a corps of eminent Clergymen. J. SANDERSON, D.D., Managing Editor. New York: E. B. Treat, Broadway.

We are much obliged for the regular transmission of the numbers of this new serial as they have month by month, since May, appeared. It is one of the almost endless progeny of *The Homilist*, and does more credit to its sire than many do. We confess we are not able to discover any special feature in which it is an improvement on its progenitor, while in some points there seems to us to be deterioration. Certainly its plagiarisms make it resemble some of its fellows rather than its father.

JUBILEE OF CONGREGATIONALISM IN AUSTRALIA, 1883. Sydney: Lee and Ross, Market Street.

Just as we are going to press this well got up little memorial volume has reached us. A glance at the proceedings it narrates, and the sermons and speeches it records, is enough to assure us that they are many in the mother country to whom it will be very acceptable. Mr. Jefferis' sermon is distinguished by vigour of thought, breadth of view, enthusiasm of spirit: while no one of the papers or addresses is without marks of much power, and features of sterling interest, quite apart from their controversial bearings, with which in these columns we are not concerned.

CHURCH LESSONS FOR YOUNG CHURCHMEN. By Rev. J. H. TITCOMB, M.A. London : Church of England Sunday School Institute, Fleet Street.

This is an honest and painstaking endeavour to equip Young Churchmen with the reasons "Why they are not Dissenters, and why they are Churchmen." Our pages have never, for the last quarter of a century, devoted themselves to ecclesiastical controversies. No doubt there are reasons why men on one side and the other should engage in the war of "isms." But too frequently, as in Mr. Titcomb's case, such gladiators, not from ill-will but from ignorance, are very prone to wrong their opponents. Sometimes the misconceptions are cruel, but often only ridiculous.

TWO WORLDS ARE OUR'S. By HUGH MACMILLAN, D.D., LL.D. New Edition. London : Macmillan & Co.

Dr. Hugh Macmillan has found a niche for his work in the literature of the day which was empty before, and which he fills with an ability that is conspicuous and everywhere famous. This is a worthy successor to those he has already issued in a series, that every lover of Nature and of God must prize very highly. Sometimes we think his analogies and parallelisms are a little strained, but he has the genuine parabolic inspiration, and seldom fails to invest with their higher worth and meaning all the material things he touches. Teachers who are saturated with Dr. Macmillan's spirit will be richly qualified for illustrating Scripture, interpreting Nature, and interesting Man.






Leading Homily.

PLEASURE NOT ANTAGONISTIC TO GOODNESS.

“LET EACH ONE OF US PLEASE HIS NEIGHBOUR FOR THAT WHICH IS GOOD UNTO EDIFYING.”—*Romans* xv. 2. (*R.V.*)

 HIS is among a number of rules and admonitions concerning conscientious differences of opinion and practice: and the pleasing of men here enjoined is that which has for its end their real good. Hence it is of considerable importance that we endeavour to satisfy ourselves as to the fact that, although pleasure and goodness are frequently in opposition, seemingly antagonistic to one another, there is really no reason why these two desires should be opposed to each other, but a very strong reason why they should be one. Moreover, the reconciler of the two, of goodness with enjoyment, is the need of others. The three leading thoughts herein sought to be developed are, first, *conflicting desires*; second, *regard to self the cause of antagonism*; third, *others' needs the only remedy*.

I.—CONFLICTING DESIRES. Asceticism, in the form of abstinence from this or that, has often been pointed out as the panacea for all diseases, the precursor of numberless joys. Hence it is well to know whether pleasure and goodness are antagonistic.

Among the passions of men there exist a desire for pleasure

and a desire for goodness. These two desires vary both in their forms and in their strength ; the desire for pleasure may be more widely spread and constant, but the desire for doing right has proved itself, certainly, not less powerful in many of those in whom it has existed. These two passions have been in intense opposition. The desire for goodness, for instance, has led men (as it leads some still) to oppose to the utmost degree their desire for pleasure. Although among us to-day this tendency has, in great measure, passed away, yet there is still a feeling that goodness has some opposition to pleasure. Furthermore, our recognised thought of goodness is, more or less, that of foregoing our own direct enjoyment. On reflection, however, it will be evident that whether goodness has any connection with foregoing pleasure or not, depends on the state of feeling of the person. Here is an illustration—"Suppose a person wholly regarding some other's good, and having no desire except to serve him ; then it can make no difference to his goodness whether the action, on his part, which that other's good calls for is pleasurable or not. Such a person's "goodness" consists in his desire to serve the other, in the absolute preference of that other's advantage to his own ; and this cannot be in any way affected by the kind of action for which that other's good may call. That would make moral quality depend on merely external circumstances. Take the case of an architect who, gratuitously and for the children's sake, draws a plan for a school. Let it be supposed that it is an artistic pleasure to him to draw the design, and a tedious task to calculate the materials required. Suppose a morning spent by him in the calculations, and the afternoon in drawing the design. It were absurd to suggest that he was more "good" in the tedious than in the pleasant task : both are done for the children ; both equally done for them ; both absolutely alike in goodness. It might, perhaps, be more strengthening to the character to do a toilsome task, but that is a different thing. And it is also true that the nature of the motive may be more *exhibited*, and visibly shown to be free from regard to self in the action that involves pain. And this may be of great advantage also for many reasons, but it is a different thing from more goodness being *present*."

Thus it is clear that when the regard is to others, a man's goodness has no relation to any abstaining from pleasure. Indeed, so far from this, a goodness which consists in a wish to serve others must prompt a desire, rather, that the actions by which that service can be rendered should be pleasurable ones. For will not the desire be for the most efficient service? and are not deeds most perfectly performed when they are pleasurable? In truth, in the very best work pleasure is an essential constituent. Therefore, a perfect desire to serve another, with no thought of oneself, would lead to the desire that the act of service should be a pleasurable one, in order that it might be of the very best kind, and performed in the most effective way. Not a doubt that a perfect desire to serve implies a perfect willingness for painful service if it be required; if there be not that willingness the desire to serve is not perfect; but it cannot induce the least preference for absence of pleasure, but rather the contrary; for the presence of pleasure in it gives most power to the service.

Whence then the feeling that goodness has a connection with abstinence from pleasure? Is not the source of this feeling plain? For if our thought be of ourselves, a desire for goodness can express itself only in a willingness for diminished pleasure. This follows from the very fact of the regard being to ourselves, for though it may be by no means wrong to do a pleasant thing for our own pleasure's sake, it cannot have any character of positive goodness; and nothing is left for a desire for goodness to express itself in, except self-restraint and the putting away of pleasure. "Thus by regard to ourselves these two desires within us—for pleasure and for goodness—are put into opposition. We may, in a sense, gratify either, but both together we cannot. Regard to ourselves, however innocent and legitimate, however free from excess, or carefully guarded against injury to others, carries with it this effect inseparably—it makes our passions fight. If we will enjoy pleasure we forego goodness; if we will seek goodness we forego pleasure. A natural, harmonious expression of goodness is cut off, and the desire for it is forced into antagonism to pleasure not in the least degree belonging to it."

Now it is that we see how this antagonism is brought about,

viz., by regarding ourselves. Here is an illustration to show that regard to ourselves is not necessary. "Suppose a man acting wholly with regard to others, what would he do? First, everything that it would benefit others to do, or injure others for him to leave undone. Secondly, whenever it occurred, that the action could benefit or injure no one, then—since his strength is used for others—he would do that which tended most to maintain and increase it; and that would be to enjoy all pleasures that would not injure him: weaken his body or overrate his will; that is, he would enjoy all pleasure that is not excess; and excess means less pleasure in the end. A person acting wholly for others would do all things there was any use in doing; and when no *use* was immediately concerned, would do all that most increased his power."

There is no reason, therefore, for anyone to act for himself; there is this reason against it, that in so far as he does so, goodness to him is perverted, and made to mean a thing it does not mean; nay, more, a thing it cannot *safely* mean.

Then, again, in so far as we do pleasant things, do we not necessarily act for ourselves? Certainly not. Taking care of ourselves is not a thing that need to be done *for* ourselves. Take the case of a General in command of an army. He sees the fight going on all around him which he must wish to share more closely. What, however, does he? He takes care of himself, avoiding risks of wounds, or death, for his army's sake, not for his own.

Again, suppose a person goes to see a sick friend, along a pleasant road, on a fine day, and the walk sends pleasure through every vein; he goes for the sake of his sick friend as absolutely as if his path lay through morass and storm. If it had lain so he would have gone just the same. The pleasure is an incident, not a motive. Whatever pleasant thing we do, however pleasant, however keenly enjoyed, if we would equally have done it for another's sake, though it had been unpleasant, we do for that other's sake, not for our own. There is no more unreasonable confusion than that which confounds doing things which are useful to others, if they are pleasant, with acting for ourselves.

The cruelties of the ascetic life are the outcome of this confusion. For was not that life an attempt to put away acting for self? Not a doubt that in this it had a true and noble aim. "But with a confusion," as has been said, in men's minds between doing pleasant things (though useful to others) and acting for self, it is evident that the attempt to put away acting for self must have meant, to them, putting away all pleasant things, while in truth it means not this at all, but doing all things, pleasant or painful alike, that others' needs require."

Another error is the opinion that men must act mainly for themselves; that that is their nature and the construction of the world, and the spring by which its progress must be carried on.

Now we have seen that this opinion has no basis, and that, as we have truly said, no single action of all man's life need be done for himself; but with a confusion existing in his thoughts between doing pleasant things and acting for self, it is evident that that opinion must have been forced upon him as soon as the ascetic attempt to put pleasure away for the sake of goodness had to be given up on account of the evils which it caused. If doing pleasant things (though useful to others) be confused with acting for self, then to find that pleasant things cannot be put away, must involve the conviction that acting for self is necessary.

Another point worthy of notice in these conflicting desires, is the following: The strife has changed its issue in our hands, but has not ceased. As an able writer tersely says—"Our fathers, making goodness and pleasure fight, sought to give the victory to goodness, and pleasure lay crushed before it—before a false name of goodness; we, still making goodness and pleasure fight, even as they, consent to let pleasure conquer, and goodness lies crushed before it—before a false name of pleasure. For that pleasure to which good is sacrificed is but a false pleasure of old, a false name of goodness; goodness outside, but lacking its soul: now a false name of pleasure; pleasure outside, but lacking its soul." For the conditions of goodness and of pleasure are the same: the strife between them must be reconciled. In their very nature they are one; and neither truly possesses its own life till

they are made one. They are one when the regard is to others; opposed when the regard is to self. What then are others' needs to us? They are the appointed reconcilers of goodness and pleasure.

II.—REGARD TO SELF THE CAUSE OF ANTAGONISM. Beginning with regard to himself first, such *makes* his goodness mean refusing to enjoy, and three courses are open to him; the first of which is to refuse goodness and indulge his passion for enjoying to the utmost, crucifying one unsatisfied passion in his breast; or, second, to refuse pleasure and indulge his passion for goodness to the utmost, crucifying another unsatisfied passion in his breast; or, third, to try and make a balance between them, indulging neither freely, but half-heartedly, crucifying within his breast both passions; tantalized, but no more satisfied than before. Keeping regard to himself, either of these courses he can pursue; each of them he has pursued, as history bears visible testimony. The last is ours. No other course is open. Regard to self means war between pleasure and goodness; strife between man's passions. They are seed and harvest; sowing self-regard means reaping war. "Thus," as it has been pertinently said, "had there been no wants of others to appeal to them, men must have remained thus for ever: torn by opposing desires, beaten about between alternate ice and fire; between self-pleasure and self-torture; flying to each but to think the other better, and with no deliverance. Pleasure for himself and no goodness; or, goodness for himself and no pleasure; every part of life in which the one was made barren of the other. How should he rest? How does he? When we feel our lives unsatisfying, our hearts ill at ease, need we look farther for the cause? With whatever limitations, with whatever superadded charities, if our wants are put first, disharmony has entered into our souls; there is strife within, and no outside resource can ease it. The needs of others bear the remedy, for by them the strife is healed. Others' needs put first, made the motive of life, determining its rule, bring back the banished goodness over the whole domain of pleasure. For this is what the needs of others do. Quite falsely we look on them as demands, as interfering with our enjoyments. They never have been so. The enemy of pleasure is the demand for goodness

arising in man's heart while his regard is still on himself. While his own pleasure or his own virtue stands first in his thought, he makes his desire for goodness the banisher of pleasure, and leaves it no other choice; turns against all joy a power against which nothing can permanently stand; which has proved itself stronger than fire or sword, mightier to endure than all tortures are to tame. The power by which joy is banished is that which makes man's own passion for goodness banish it, which forbids him to let pleasure be because it will mean pleasing himself." The reconciler of goodness with enjoyment is—the needs of others.

III.—OTHERS' NEEDS THE ONLY REMEDY. How then do others' needs make goodness and pleasure one? By removing the contradiction between them which acting for self introduces. Do they not make free all pleasure? For every pleasure that is service to another, taken for that other's sake, has in it all the goodness there would be if it were pain. And when a service to another is in itself a painful thing, and the fulfilling of others' needs means the foregoing of our own delight, even then those needs do not change their character, they are still the bringers of joy. For it is not they that impose the pain; man's own need for goodness would have imposed that upon him. What the needs of others do is to bring into this pain, or sacrifice—hard task and burden as it is when for our own goodness' sake we take it—a leaven of delight; they make it no longer virtue for our own sake, but service for another's—itself a joy; *the* joy.

"With false eyes," one has eloquently said, "we have looked on others' needs; man's nature was at strife within itself, and they have come with soft hands and supplicating voices, and offered to it peace. They offer it to *us*. Only by ignoring and disregarding them has the strife been made. For what would regarding others' needs, and being wholly led by them, imply? Absence of enjoying? Starvation, sackcloth, foul air, indolence, banished beauty, neglected art, forgotten literature, impeded thought? Of all these things the utmost contrary. What most *serves*? All *pleasant things*; among them, yet only one among them, that most essential element of joy, energetic and industrious work. Whatever injures *anyone* detracts from service."

"The thought of goodness in diminished pleasure," says the same writer, "betrays its origin; it arose from putting self first; which perverts the thought of goodness into that of self-restraint—into goodness *about* self and for its sake. Not a doubt that there has been a value in that error. It has been helpful for man to think that goodness must be in suffering, and therefore to have sought sorrow. Still, not in itself does service mean sorrow; not in themselves are others' needs the ministers of self-restraint. They *forbid* goodness to banish pleasant things; they put away self-restraint, by putting aside the self that needs it. Over the whole domain of pleasant things, on which self-regard broods with a sullen blight—making it bare of goodness if pleasure come, or bare of pleasure if goodness put her foot—over the whole domain of pleasant things the needs of others sweep like a breath of spring; and the barren pleasure, all for self, the barren goodness, all for self, alike break forth and blossom into a pleasure that is good.

"And thus, also, we may see a power that God has kept in His hands, to put away from the heart of man that regard first to self that clings so to him. For whenever the regard to self has made men—for their goodness' sake—refuse pleasures, then, by bringing needs of others which demand for their fulfilment that those pleasures be *not* refused, God makes a call upon man's soul, a new and deeper call. In those needs He says to men: Be different in your hearts; cast out from them that which puts pleasure at strife with goodness; make the thoughts of others first."

DARLINGTON.

FREDERICK A. CHARLES.

"Some monks were eating at a festival, and one said to the serving man, 'I eat nothing cooked; tell them to bring me salt.' The serving man began to talk loudly: 'That brother eats no cooked meat; bring him a little salt.' Quoth Abbot Theodore: 'It were more better for thee, brother, to eat meat in thy cell than to hear thyself talked about in the presence of thy brethren.'"—*From "The Words of the Elders."*

Germs of Thought.

The Mortality of Human Thoughts.

“IN THAT VERY DAY HIS THOUGHTS PERISH.”—*Psalm* cxlvi. 4.

Do thoughts perish? Nay, does anything perish? No, saith the scientist, not one atom in the whole material universe. Matter is essentially indestructible. Does life, conscious or unconscious, ever become extinct? Has one single spark from universal life ever been extinguished? No, again saith the scientist, not one drop in the ever deepening, ever widening ocean of existence that rolls throughout immensity, beating music into the ear of the Infinite, has ever ceased to be, or ever will. All seems undying and deathless. How then can thought perish? In what sense can you predicate mortality of thoughts? In other words, what are the human thoughts that will perish?

I.—ALL HYPOTHETICAL THOUGHTS ARE MORTAL. Perhaps most of the thoughts of men are of this class; mere conjectures, more or less probable, but not certainties—guesses at things. In sooth, all thoughts that are not in strict agreement with immutable facts, are of this order. And are not such the overwhelming majority in the case of individuals, communities, and the world at large? To whatever class of subjects they refer—matter or mind, business or pleasure, commerce, science, or religion—all such thoughts *must* perish. They are perishable in their very nature, and they are perishing every day, not only as they are found in volumes that crowd our libraries, but as they appear in our own individual minds. Some of them we cherish, and these may live a little longer than others. But others come as uninvited visitants and unwelcome guests, and find no lodgement. They are mental fugitives; in rapid succession they chase each other like the fantastic clouds before the strong wind. Or, to

change the figure, such thoughts are like the leaves of the forest, whilst some of them begin to wither and fall ere autumnal winds have touched them, they all fall dead at last. The heaps of dead leaves which the gardener every day in autumn sweeps up from the well-wooded swards under his care, are emblems of these hypothetical thoughts. Do I undervalue such thoughts? No! Each of these rotting leaves had its charm and has its use. At first it quivered with life and sparkled in the sun; and its decay, no doubt, plays a useful part in the economy of nature. Hypothetical thoughts! Do not despise them. Who can tell the quickening impulses, the beneficent sciences and arts that have come out of them, and will come again? Albeit they must all perish as they touch reality. As the grandest billow, when it breaks on the rocky shore, falls to pieces, so the most majestic hypotheses of men are wrecked as the mind touches the stern realities of eternity.*

II.—ALL SENSUOUS THOUGHTS ARE MORTAL. In the Scriptures we read of the “fleshly mind,” “fleshly wisdom,” and of those who “judge after the flesh.” *How much of human thought is started, shaped, and swayed by the senses!* Their springs of movement are in the senses. Their horizon is bounded by the sensuous. These comprehend at least three classes.

First: Those which refer to personal *happiness*. They connect the enjoyment of man with the senses, as something that streams into him from without, rather than that wells up within, as consisting in the titillation of the nerves, the gratification of the appetites, the indulgence of the passions. Such thoughts are embodied in sensational literature, in songs and plays, in the comic and the tragic, in sensuous sermons and ritualistical observances. Ah, me! much of the religion of Christendom is the embodiment of “fleshly” thought! Such thoughts seek for happiness in the fleshly and the earthly.

Secondly: Those which refer to personal *wealth*. These regard the worth of a man as consisting not in intellectual and moral excellence, but in material possessions. Such thoughts, to

* See an essay on the “Vanity and Glory of Literature,” by Henry Rogers, in *Edinburgh Review*, Vol. II., Page 206.

a great extent, work the brains and the muscles of the men of this age.

Thirdly: Those which refer to personal *greatness*. These identify greatness with an ancient ancestry, often renowned for villainy, with high-sounding titles, with magnificent attire, with dazzling pageantry. Dives going in pomp to hell is their great man, not Lazarus winged by angels into Paradise.

Now such sensuous thoughts as these are *mortal*. They must perish. They are dying by millions every moment, and they must all die at death. At death the conviction will seize every man that happiness is not to be found in the human body, but in the holy soul: that wealth is not to be found in material possessions, but in spiritual virtues: that human greatness is not to be found anywhere but in moral conformity to Christ; that he only is great who is good, and he only is good who is "created anew unto Christ Jesus in good works." "In that very day his thoughts perish."

III.—ALL MERCENARY THOUGHTS ARE MORTAL. By mercenary thoughts I mean those thoughts that are taken up with the question, "What shall I eat, what shall I drink, and wherewithal shall I be clothed?" Thoughts that are concerned entirely with man's material interest in this world, and are limited entirely to time. The *worldly* schemes and plans of men are all perishing and perishable. Were all the wrecked purposes of all the business men in London, for one day, fully registered, we could almost say the world itself would not contain the books. What a host of enterprises are breaking down, undertakings destroyed! The shores of memory, often black as erebus and frigid as the arctic zone, are crowded with the wrecks of worldly schemes. At death all worldly purposes fall to ruin, nevermore to be reconstructed.

CONCLUSION—We learn from this subject—

First: *The amazing productiveness of our thinking faculty*. The thinking faculty is the distinguishing glory of man. All the other sentient tenantry of our earth have the susceptibility of receiving impressions from the external; but their impressions are fleeting, and over them they have no control. They can

neither retain or expel, weaken or strengthen one of all their countless sensations. Like hailstones in summer, they melt as they fall. But man by his thinking faculty can arrest them, hold them in his grasp, analyse their elements, trace out their relations, magnify or minify them, work them into a science, or bury them in oblivion, crush them in embryo, or nurse them into glorious deeds. All human beings have this faculty, though not in the same measure; yet all think, even the weakest, and that by necessity of nature. This faculty is always *busy*, and amazingly *productive*. True, the productions differ widely: those of some as compared with others are as grass seed to the acorn, as the egg of a wren to that of the queen of birds. Men's thoughts are more in number than the hairs of their heads. Wave does not succeed wave more rapidly than thought succeeds thought. We might well tremble in awe in the presence of this wonderful faculty—it is that in truth which creates for us the world we live in. We learn—

Secondly: *The urgent necessity for rightly controlling our thinking faculty.* “There is nothing good or bad,” says *Shakespeare*, “but thinking makes it so.” When the thinking faculty runs riot, and is uncontrolled by an enlightened conscience, it fills the mind with the *vile* and the *perishing*. And what a calamity this to any man! The world in which a man lives, is in truth the thoughts that fill him. If these thoughts perish, his world falls to pieces, it vanishes as a vision of the night, and he is homeless and desolate, a vagrant and a pauper in the universe. And if his thinking faculty is not rightly controlled, perish they must. All his ideas, however gorgeous in aspect and melodious in sound, grand and musical as the productions even of Milton himself, must perish. Let us, therefore, control this faculty of amazing productiveness. Let not sensuality, selfishness, ambition, or a lawless imagination stimulate and sway it, but let right be its master, let conscience rule it, and then it will produce thoughts that will never perish. “Thoughts,” to use the language of *Wordsworth*, “whose very sweetness yieldeth proof that they were born for immortality.”

LONDON.

DAVID THOMAS, D.D.

The Son of Man.

“THE SON OF MAN.”—*Matthew* xvi. 13.

THIS is our Lord's favourite title, self-assumed and most frequently used by Him. It has not passed into the theological phraseology of Christendom, and is seldom used by Christian people unless they are quoting our Lord's own language. It is distinctively the name which Jesus took to Himself. The disciples did not use it. It is not found in any of the epistles, and outside of the gospels it is met with only once in the New Testament (*Acts* vii. 56). Although our Lord used it frequently the disciples did not. This is easily explained. They dwelt upon the Lord's divinity; He upon His humanity. The thought of His deity turned away, if it did not somewhat obscure, the thought of His manhood. The splendour of the divine power He wielded, so amazed them that they forgot, or seemed to think lightly of, the ordinary life of humanity, with its limitations and its sorrows, which He lived. They abstained from the use of the title, even after they had come to regard Him as the promised Messiah. This is all the more remarkable from the fact that they must have known that it was a familiar one of the Messiah. Their favourite title was “Son of God.” And they may have been led to give more prominence to the divinity than the humanity because it was the claim which the Jews most strenuously resisted and failed most to understand. In the early days of Christianity the divinity of Jesus was the crucial question. Its recognition made men disciples. His humanity was not questioned. Doubt of it was of later growth. His divinity was the difficulty of the Jew, the great obstacle to His reception, but the truth that required to be recognised for discipleship. So the disciples used the title which embodied it. The title, “Son of God,” when it was first used, caused great surprise. Men were amazed at the claim it held; shocked at, what seemed to them, the height of blasphemy. But the title, “Son of Man,” caused no surprise. The people were in no way startled by it. For them it had a distinct meaning. It was

not new and unprecedented, it was old and familiar. They did not ask, "What does it mean?" They only asked, "Who is the Son of Man?" It was a familiar title of the Messiah, and in our Lord's time it was well known as such.

Time has altered the order of these questions. We do not ask, "Who is the Son of Man?" We ask, "What does the title mean?" What is there in His character, person, or work that it seeks to emphasise? It contains the doctrine of The Incarnation; asserts, in unmistakeable terms, the perfect humanity of Jesus. But the form of the assertion invites attention.

I.—"The Son of MAN." The word used here for man is noticeable. We have only one word which is used in different senses without any change of form. With it we sometimes denote the human race without distinction of sex; sometimes the masculine sex only. It is left to the context generally to explain what is meant. It was different, however, with the Greeks, Romans, and Hebrews. They had two and more. One expressed the generic weakness and frailty of human nature; another, the strength and dignity; another, the sex. These we distinguish by compounds, adverbs, adjectives, or by the general drift of the sentence. The word itself, used separately, tells us nothing. Now the word used here is a word which speaks of the race—of human nature generally. It makes, in the first place, no distinction of sex.

(1) This is our first point. The type of character Jesus presented was not of one side or section of humanity, but of humanity as a whole. Our race has two sections—the masculine and the feminine. The ideal of humanity lies in the union of both. The type of character then which Jesus presented was not masculine alone, it was also womanly; in Him masculine strength was softened and beautified by all the graces and tenderness of the woman. He is not simply the perfection of manhood, but the perfection of humanity. In His life the characteristic qualities of both sexes are harmoniously blended. He is thus the ideal of humanity, and not simply of man. For in Him the virtue of both sections of the race are found. This is noticeable in the influence which Christianity has had upon society.

Men excel in energy, self-reliance, perseverance, and magna-

nimity ; women in humility, gentleness, modesty, and endurance. Men lean to justice ; women incline most to mercy. These qualities are characteristic of the sexes. In antiquity the virtues most admired were almost exclusively masculine. Courage, self-assertion, magnanimity, above all patriotism, were the leading features of their ideal moral type ; chastity, modesty, the gentler virtues of the woman were undervalued. They had slight, if any, honour ; sometimes totally ignored. Take Greek art for example. Its beauty is masculine, more than feminine. So its favourite form is sculpture. For sculpture is more suited than painting for the representation of masculine beauty, that is, the beauty of strength. The Romans found their moral ideal in the soldier and statesman. Departments of service requiring the qualities of manhood more than the gifts and graces of womanhood. Paganism was thus one-sided ; its virtues were masculine. They were stern even to cruelty. But the advent of Jesus marks a change. The progress of Christianity revolutionised the moral ideal. Mercy began to plead with justice. The tenderness of woman began to soften, not to weaken, the strength of man. The moral ideal passed from the purely heroic to the saintly. The change then which Christianity wrought in morals is a change from a type of character, essentially and solely masculine, to one which is as essentially a union of the qualities of both sexes. This revolution throws light upon the character of Jesus. For the character of the Founder of Christianity is shewn in the types of character which Christianity approves and creates. If the gentler virtues are by His teaching developed, as well as those which are sterner and more distinctively manly, then we say that He held within His heart and, therefore, in His influence the characteristics of both sexes. Womanhood is crowned in Jesus. In Him "there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female." He is the perfection of humanity ; the ideal glory of our race.

(2) There is something more than this, however, in the word "man" of the title. It takes up, as already noticed, humanity in its weakness, not in its strength ; in its frailty, not in its dignity. This fact touches the character of the Incarnation.

In certain aspects human nature is truly great. Man is, in certain points, truly noble; there are about him still some traces of a power that is more than earthly, that makes him lord of nature. Now our Lord might have been one with us in those qualities alone which lift us above the beasts of the field, and make us conscious and intelligent beings. He might have identified Himself with our race on its greater side, so that a few great men, men of genius, the foremost leaders of thought, might have felt some vague affinity with Him. He might have appeared as the central sun from which the constellations of genius drew their light and inspiration. He might have been identified with some, but not with all, touched some phase of life, shared some qualities, the strength, but not the weakness of our race.

But the title, by laying hold of the generic weakness of humanity, emphasised the fact that the humanity of our Lord was thorough, not partial. The weakness and limitations of our nature lead us to a sense of brotherhood much more readily than the possession of high intellectual gifts. They unite us more. Pain, and sorrow, and death, the sense of want, the feeling of dependence, make us feel our common humanity much more readily than genius. Sorrow touches more than culture. The weakness of man is more universal than his strength. Genius more exceptional than suffering; the grave more universal than the college; more enter the one than the other. Our helplessness is universal, it touches all races, and all classes far more than the sense of power. He who, therefore, takes upon himself our weakness, participates more thoroughly in human life, awakens the sense of brotherhood more keenly than he who knows only its prerogatives and powers.

Now Christ did this. He was made "perfect through suffering." His was a real, not a fictitious humanity; complete, not partial. He lived under those conditions and limitations which nature has imposed upon us all. He refused to feed Himself as He fed the five thousand on the hill-slopes of Galilee, or the wedding guests at Cana. He knew what hunger was, and thirst, and weariness. "He had not where to lay His head." Love alone saved Him from want. During a period of His life the charity

of some women supported Him ; two or three warm-hearted and devoted women "ministered to Him of their substance," and yet He had within His grasp a power more wonderful than any known to man or angel. He might, if He had willed, have escaped many of the experiences incident to man's weakness and dependence, but He refused. As a man He lived, subject to the laws of human life. His humanity, then, was not special, or exceptional ; it was the humanity of the race, the humanity in which we all are brothers.

These are some of the facts which our Lord laid hold of and gloried in, in the frequent use of this title, "Son of Man." It brings before us the thought of the Creator enduring the weakness and coming within the limits of the creature—the king sharing the lot of the poorest citizens, that he might lift them up into his richness and his life. Here is a sacrifice grander and greater than the world has ever known, confined not to one act, but embracing the life, lying at the very root of the existence, and determining the whole current of the life.

II.—"THE SON of Man." Sonship. Christ was not only man, He was also "*the Son of Man.*" The idea takes us a step further in the alliance of Jesus with our flesh. Our Lord might have appeared on this earth in full-grown manhood. The conception is possible. A body might have been provided for Him ; it might have been created, not derived. He might have appeared among men as a man—without having passed through birth, infancy, and youth—with a nature all his own. He might have descended, as He ascended, from the clouds of Heaven in full maturity of human powers and life. If He had done so, He might have been still "one with us." He would still have been man, but he would not have been *the Son of Man.*

Sonship involves communicated life. Father and son have kindred life. The difference in the relationship is this—the father bestows, the son receives life. It is derived. This is the characteristic of sonship. And because it is derived it is kindred, unfolds itself in likeness to the father's, follows the same laws, is subject to the same conditions, and, although in many ways different, in essence it is the same.

Now in the title, "Son of God," we dwell upon the relationship of God and Christ—the Divine Father and the Divine Son. Why do we not do the same with this title, "Son of Man?" Its form is the same. Sonship is claimed in the one case as well as in the other. Why do we hesitate to speak, in relation to His human nature, of humanity as the father? And yet the text asserts it—calls Him "The *Son* of Man." He had two natures—one of God and one of man. The mystery of the Incarnation is not made any clearer by lessening the reality of either nature. We require to insist on the completeness of both. His human nature was derived, like our own, from the race. He was born of a woman,—born as we are born; passed through infancy and youth like us all. He was "the Son" of the race. His humanity was not a likeness, it was identity; not an imitation of ours, but a participation in ours. His body was derived and developed, not created. He took upon Himself our nature, He did not copy it. Consider what this leads to:—

1. Our Lord *ascended* with the body our race gave Him. The body that suffered was the body that arose. It was changed,—changed in many ways, no doubt. Mary did not know Him; He journeyed with two disciples to Emmaus, but they did not recognize Him. He came and went in mysterious ways, moved about as if independent of the laws which circumscribe all our movements. He was changed, but not radically different,—the wound prints were there. He was recognised. The body was changed, but it was the same body still. What the change was we cannot tell. The body was glorified; it became subject to death no more. We infer then that whatever be the changes it may have to undergo, human nature is capable of glorification and immortality. The ascension of Jesus Christ in human form is one great reason for believing that man in his glorified state, in the life of the resurrection, has a body as well as a spirit. The belief, as some one has said, gives distinctness to our anticipation of heaven. Without it our conception of heaven becomes vague and shapeless. We cannot conceive of a purely spiritual existence; it goes beyond the scope of our faculties, it cannot stand the pressure of the palpable realities around us. But when

we see Jesus ascending in man's body, the thought of our glorification through Him becomes more definite. Heaven ceases to be a state merely, it becomes a place; the fellowship of saints becomes conceivable.

2. Jesus in the flesh *was transfigured*. "As He prayed the fashion of His countenance was altered." It is possible then for human nature to be transfigured too, for the body of this flesh to be altered so as to hold communion with the life of heaven.

3. If Jesus, in a nature like our own and under conditions incident to ordinary human life, *lived a sinless life*, in all things obeyed God's law, then we need not leave the body to obey God's law, to find a sinless life. Divine life is possible now as well as hereafter,—possible on earth as well as in heaven. In Jesus Christ we have the life of God, which is the life of heaven, living and working in flesh and blood, within the limits nature has imposed upon us all. Here humanity is perfected; it lives without blot and without sin. Surely it may be for us all the promise, yea the foreshadowing, of what this nature may, through Him, become.

DUNDEE.

JONATHAN ROEBUCK.

Christ Declining Anodyne.

"AND THEY GAVE HIM TO DRINK WINE MINGLED WITH MYRRH:
BUT HE RECEIVED IT NOT."—*Mark* xv. 23.

It was customary for benevolent ladies in Jerusalem to provide some kind of anodyne for the mitigation of the pains of those condemned to suffer death. Hence this medicated cup.

But it was refused. Why? Was the relief not lawful in view of the prolonged agonies of crucifixion? If lawful, at least, not expedient, and, therefore, in highest sense, not lawful.

What were our Lord's motives? Note three things—

I.—*He was about to die.*

II.—*He was about to conclude the great work of His life.*

III.—*He was about to perfect Himself for the office of High Priest of Mankind.*

I.—HE WAS ABOUT TO DIE; and was a man, not less a man because Divine. There is an instinct in men leading them to wish to meet death with open eye, and brain unclouded.

“I would hate that death bandaged my eyes, and forbore, and
bade me creep past,

No; let me taste the whole of it.”

BROWNING, “PROSPICE.”

His human nature might forbid the cup, which in soothing pain, would numb the sense, and dull the clearness of the faculties.

II.—HE WAS ABOUT TO CONCLUDE THE GREAT WORK OF HIS LIFE. His death had vast spiritual meanings and issues, was an act, not a sinking to rest. It was the consummation of a work that demanded the consent and co-operation of all the powers of the soul, a work, in the accomplishment of which it was of supreme importance that mind, heart, conscience, should be awake, alert, capable of acting with unimpeded energy. Should He, then, when the crisis was at hand, the end that was to crown all, allow His clear and steadfast soul to be steeped in drowsy languors.

The priests were forbidden to drink wine when in the discharge of their sacred functions lest their minds should be confused. Much more might Jesus desire to be free from confusing, benumbing influences, when the great sacrifice was to be consummated.

III.—HE WAS ABOUT TO PERFECT HIMSELF FOR THE OFFICE OF HIGH PRIEST OF MANKIND. Perfect, for this work, through sufferings. Therefore He would not limit His experience of human pain by sparing Himself any anguish. He will “feel all that He may pity all” (*Keble*). He will drink the cup of woe to the bitter dregs; He will sound every depth. Thus He will become a merciful High Priest.

What does His self-denial here teach us, apart from its special motives?

The age we live in—soft, luxurious, self-indulgent. Man’s chief concern to live as easily as possible. Such views of life harmonise ill with Christ’s character and conduct. His rebuke to the self-indulgent spirit. But guard against misconceptions.

(1) *He does not advocate asceticism, i.e.,* He would not have us court pain, and be in love with sorrow.

(2) *Nor was He a stoic.* He does not say we are to be careless of suffering, and to despise it.

(3) *Nor is the principle He teaches that we may not accept alleviations, e.g., anaesthetics in physical pain, sympathy in sorrow.* These not unlawful.

What is the principle suggested by the refusal to drink the stupefying cup? This, that pain is to be borne when our higher interests, or the interests of others, require it; it is not to be thought of first, but the Kingdom of Heaven; rather it is not to be avoided when it is fitted to serve some good end, but bravely to be met, and patiently to be endured. There are, therefore, unlawful methods of escaping pain, moral anodynes we may not use. Illustrations—

First: *Disposition among the young to evade the discipline of steady, honest work, and adopt easy methods of accomplishing appointed tasks.* Unlawful helps in school-days. Weak and cowardly devices for shuffling through the preparation for life's duties.

Second: *The sorrows of life.* Sorrow not always to be run away from. Its message, its mission, its functions. How much may be lost by too great eagerness to dismiss sad thoughts, to drown cares in excitement, hard work, &c., &c. The sensibilities may be deadened thus, the affection for the dead may fail. "O, sorrow, wilt thou live with me." If we would keep our human hearts alive, warm, tender, we must not be for ever searching for anodyne for grief. Better the heart should break through grief, than slowly wither and die through suppression of it.

Third: *The pain of an uneasy conscience.* How the conscience may be drugged! The delusive cup, which numbs the moral sense, administered by friends who minimise, or excuse, the sin which troubles us. Flattery, a dangerous opiate. The sorrow of remorse to be looked at, measured, realised; not thus relieved. Find the only legitimate relief for such sorrow.

Fourth: *The distress arising from the contemplation of the sin and misery of the world.* "I cannot bear to think of what is going

on in the world," say some, and they surround themselves with the soothing influences of the life of culture, art, music, literature, congenial friends, the ingredients in the cup by which they become oblivious of the world's woes. This not lawful, not Christlike. We may not spare ourselves the pain of beholding, or the trouble of helping. In helping, the true solace. Danger of dreaming life away in an ideal world, while the real world is calling for us.

CONCLUSION.—Let Christ's life be the Orphic strain to win and hold us to every high endeavour, and protect us from the treacherous charm of the Siren voices of the world.

BRISTOL.

H. ARNOLD THOMAS, M.A.

The Summer Ended.

"THE SUMMER IS ENDED."—*Jer.* viii. 20.

THERE is a deep sadness in these words, in their original connection. Jerusalem, and the people thereabout, had been exposed to the assaults of the Chaldeans, on the one hand, and to those of Egypt on the other. It was revealed to the seer that the people should go into captivity at Babylon, for more than two generations. Opportunities for deliverance there had been, but they were gone. The complaint passed into a proverb, "The harvest is past"—the grain harvest: "the summer is ended"—the vintage, the ingathering of olive and fig—"and we are not saved."

These impressive words have often been the text of sermons after revivals of religion, to souls unsaved. The intense solemnity of one such discourse heard by me, in my boyhood, has never been forgotten.

Of any period of pain or loss we may say, with satisfaction, "It is finished"; but of pleasant scenes we speak with sadness, "They are gone!" Even in indifferent matters, in leaving an acquaintance, a house, a landscape for the last time, though nothing really attaches us to either, there is the sense of some-

thing irrevocably gone ; gone for ever, and the thought, too, that we are nearer the end when we shall part from all things earthly. "Nevermore," forms one of the most pathetic of refrains, in song or speech. The summer is ended. Physical changes remind us. When we went to our summer retreat, the earth was flooded with light at four in the morning and the sunset came late, but now, on our return, the narrowing day declares the autumn at hand.

But *is* the summer ended ? No, if we used it aright and feel to-day its beneficent effects on character and experience. The rest we have enjoyed brings vigour to mind and heart. That is a harvest. It is a permanent fruit, as well as a memorial of the summer. Spiritual force rallies with rapidity. We return with courage to that from which we once retreated, or before which we sat in passive languor.

So with our innocent pleasures, these are gone, and yet they are not gone in their vital meaning and relationship, for they live in memory. Sufferings are often forgotten, as the waters which pass away ; but, by a benevolent provision of Providence, the memory of happy scenes is held as a bright and permanent possession. This should quicken our gratitude to God. There are colourless liquids prepared by the chemist which turn to crimson and gold when put in the sun. Under the sunlight of God's favour our blessed memories brighten, and we feel that we have gathered a cargo of wealth in the serene experience of summer-tide.

From hours of quiet reading and reflection we now return to the rush of work. What has thus been deliberately incorporated into our mental life remains. We may read rapidly for immediate use. Everyone familiar with study and reading knows that such gathered materials are soon forgotten. They are hastily gained and quickly depart, but that which comes with more leisurely meditation abides. The summer may have brought us such fruitage.

Pleasant acquaintances have terminated, in one sense, but they remain as a fact, as well as a feeling, for we have unloosed our sympathies in leisure hours as we are not wont to do amid the

exacting cares of ordinary life. We have got to the heart's centre, and have clung together as we thus communed with friends. Some of our sweetest friendships date from summer time.

Our fellowship with nature has closed, and we exchange the mountain and the meadow for the environments of men, and the work of human hands, but the sympathy and taste awakened abide. More than this, by memory and imagination we recall scenes indelibly photographed within, permanent as the mind itself. Many of us here can, at will, reproduce that curving bay at Naples, the snowy Alps, seen from the terrace at Berne, Italian lakes, English forests, the prairie, the cliff above the meadow, scenes, east or west, for ever imprinted within. "There can be no farewell to scenes like these." So in the religious experiences of the past season. We have heard sermons and seen the truth as presented by other minds; have had conference with Christian men; have passed through scenes of peril, or have had reason to note our exemption from unrest and alarm. We have returned with new inspiration, with nobler purpose, and with eager plan. If so, the summer has not ended, though its days be numbered.

We learn from this view that the Christian's seriousness, as he recalls departed days, need not be a bitter sadness. Regret should indeed be felt if we have wasted time in merely lazy indolence, yielded to the governing love of self-gratification, the benumbing influence of evil men or books; for such evil and mischief will live for ever and for ever. But if out of rest has come new zest for toil, out of communings with nature, with God, His truth, and His people, a deeper consecration and a wider plan, then we may repeat the text, with triumphant heart, "THE SUMMER IS ENDED!"

This is true of life itself. Immensely serious is the thought of the great hereafter, but it is not a bitter, blinding thought, for life's fruits remain when the stars have ceased to shine. "The day is done," we say, but a day, a week, a year is never finished, for the forces of good or evil are ever outgoing and ongoing. Science says that the globe is a temporary structure, and will be a cold, black, uninhabited sepulchre some day. The Bible says

it will be burned up; but it will live for ever in the memory of the redeemed, and of the lost, those who have been its transient inhabitants. If we reap a blessed fruitage we may say with joyful resonance, "ended," but know that its fruit is ours.

To us, as Christians, and as a Church, this review is a timely one. Have we gained new impulse for Christ's service, a deeper sense of our immortality and the nearer approach of eternity? The golden harvests are being gathered into the granaries. What is ours? This brilliant parenthesis of the year is a period of great peril to the Church. How is it with you? If it has added to the breadth and power of your spiritual life, it will be a bright prophecy of, and preparative for, that immortal summer whose beauty and rest it but remotely prefigures and predicts.

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A Message for the Aged.

"BUT JEHOIADA WAXED OLD, AND WAS FULL OF DAYS WHEN HE DIED; AN HUNDRED AND THIRTY YEARS OLD WAS HE WHEN HE DIED. AND THEY BURIED HIM IN THE CITY OF DAVID AMONG THE KINGS, BECAUSE HE HAD DONE GOOD IN ISRAEL, BOTH TOWARD GOD, AND TOWARD HIS HOUSE."—2 *Chron.* xxiv. 15, 16.

THOSE who, in reading the Bible, skip the books of the Chronicles because they bristle with forbidding looking genealogies, miss such exquisite portions as the Prayer of Jabez, and the death and burial of Jehoiada.

I.—EXAMINE THE NAME OF THIS AGED PRIEST. "What's in a name?" Sometimes nothing; sometimes everything. "*Jehoiada*," "one who has knowledge of Jehovah."

1. *Had been experimentally acquainted with Jehovah in His fatherly and merciful character.* "Acquaint now thyself with Him," &c. Could not point to mere knowledge of the grandeurs

of Creation, the wonders of the Universe of God, &c.; but to that closer, deeper, more spiritual acquaintance suggested by the words of Job,—“Now mine eye seeth Thee.” N.B.—Vanity of all, other knowledge apart from this! Christ being born into the world is of no avail—Christ must be born in me!

2. *Had, as priest, special opportunities of gaining acquaintance with God.* [Describe—the daily service of the High priest; his yearly entrance into the Holy of Holies; his waiting before the mercy-seat; the Voice that talked with him from out of the glorious cloud]. *Now* the way into the Holiest is made manifest—the veil is severed—the path is opened, and each may tread it for himself, because Jesus, our Forerunner, has for us entered. Thus we can gain knowledge of God without the assistance or intervention of any priest *other* than the Great High Priest of our profession—Christ Jesus.

II.—CONSIDER HIS BENEFICENT INFLUENCE. He had received knowledge—he imparted it. The lamp was not placed under a bushel, for in such position no sane man would place it, but it diffused light from itself, as from a centre, everywhere around. See Jehoiada—

1. *Instructing (φωριζει) the youthful king.*
2. *Acting as regent of the kingdom.*
3. *Patriotically serving his country and promoting the well-being of her people.*

4.—*Doing good to, and in connection with, the house of God.*

N.B.—How those may help who are past the years in which *activity* may be looked for. Namely, by wise counsel and earnest prayer. [Aged Jehoiada; aged Eli at door of the Tabernacle]. *Note.*—Luther praying in Coburg Castle, while Melancthon and the princes were presenting the famous Protestant confession to the Diet at Augsburg.

III.—CONTEMPLATE THE HONOURED CLOSE OF A LONG AND USEFUL LIFE. His burial in the sepulchre of the kings. Doubtless Israel “made great lamentation” for the aged priest who had lived out almost twice man’s allotted day. [*Describe*—How some few years since the Portuguese honoured their patriotic warrior and statesman, the Duke of Saldanha, when full of days he was

gathered to his fathers]; *also*,—how there was brought from the interior of Africa the body of Livingstone, across barbarous lands and stormy seas . . . until it was laid in Westminster's sacred and noble fane, there to mingle with the honoured dust of the greatest and the best. But what is this? Look upward, not downward! Follow the spirit of Jehoiada, released from its aged and worn-out dwelling, in its free upward flight!

CONCLUSION.—1. Ye who, like Jehoiada, have grown old in the service of God, every revolving year, from the days of your youth unto this day, work still, and calmly wait the summons—"Come up hither," and the welcome—"Well done."

2. Ye who have only given yourselves in the afternoon of life, Oh, how you should work for Him!

3. Ye aged, who have not yet given yourselves unto the Lord Christ. "At evening time it shall be light," like the breaking of a new day—*the breaking of the day at evening*. What a revelation! This revelation, this dawn of the spiritual day, came to Lefevre when he was seventy!

Oh, seek to enjoy this light! Get yourself accustomed to it before the blaze of Heaven bursts upon you; get accustomed to the praises, that you may the better take your place and part in "the song of Moses and the Lamb"; get that sense of the blessed and abiding presence of God that there may be no feeling of straightness when you enter where His full glory is displayed!

BRISTOL.

FAIRFAX GOODALL, M.A.

"The history of every family and of every individual is a deep tragedy; for sin is in the world, and there is no other deliverance from sin but by the way of sorrow—sorrow administered by love and received in love. So that this life is given up to the development of the sacred mystery of sorrow. It is by sorrow that God calls the prodigal to think of his true home; and it is by sorrow that He perfects His saints."
—THOMAS ERSKINE.

Homiletical Commentary.

NOTES ON THE EPISTLE OF JAMES.

“Faith Without Works.”

Chapter ii. 14-19.—“WHAT DOTH IT PROFIT, MY BRETHREN, THOUGH A MAN SAY HE HATH FAITH AND HAVE NOT WORKS? CAN FAITH SAVE HIM? IF A BROTHER OR SISTER BE NAKED, AND DESTITUTE OF DAILY FOOD, AND ONE OF YOU SAY UNTO THEM, DEPART IN PEACE, BE YE WARMED AND FILLED; NOTWITHSTANDING YE GIVE THEM NOT THOSE THINGS WHICH ARE NEEDFUL TO THE BODY; WHAT DOTH IT PROFIT? EVEN SO FAITH, IF IT HATH NOT WORKS, IS DEAD, BEING ALONE. YEA, A MAN MAY SAY, THOU HAST FAITH, AND I HAVE WORKS: SHEW ME THY FAITH WITHOUT THY WORKS, AND I WILL SHEW THEE MY FAITH BY MY WORKS. THOU BELIEVEST THAT THERE IS ONE GOD; THOU DOEST WELL: THE DEVILS ALSO BELIEVE AND TREMBLE.”

SALVATION by faith and not by works, by faith alone, and not in any degree by works; this is the pervading principle of Scripture, radical, universal. Scripture everywhere insists upon it, conscience assents to it, the reason is shut up to it; and the conclusion with which another apostle brings the teaching of Scripture, of conscience, and of reason to bear upon the convictions of his readers is one which no man, when he faces his own past life in the light of the holiness of God, can possibly evade. Who for a moment could entertain the hope of salvation grounded on his obedience to the law of God? Who is prepared to go into the presence of God with the deeds of the flesh, expecting on the ground of these to be received into the everlasting habitations? We have no works of our own to save

Salvation by
faith alone.

us, the works of our own that we do have condemned us; and if it is to be a matter of what we have of our own, there can be but one result; the due award of our deeds is, and must to all eternity be, condemnation. But if it is not to be a matter of what we have of our own, if it is to be a matter of what some other has of his own, if it is to be by, and on account of the deeds, and, therefore, of the merits of this other who in accordance with the righteous and merciful character of God, offers Himself to God in our place; in this case it would seem that the only possible alternative, the only possible way by which we can get the benefit of all this is that of faith, of receptive belief. How can we take to ourselves the benefits of our Saviour's work which He wrought out for us, except by putting forth our hand to take them? And what is this, in the spiritual world, but believing? It is plain enough that we cannot be justified by our own works; if in God's grace we may be justified by the works of another, it is surely as plain that the means by which we are to unite ourselves to these works, or rather to Him who has wrought them out, is faith, a vital and cordial assent of the whole man to the Gospel offer, "the embracing of the Lord Jesus Christ as He is offered in the Gospel."

It is matter of the last moment that this radical Gospel truth be made clear to the mind, that it may become energetic in the life. How do we expect to be saved? We know we are helpless and cannot save ourselves; God says to us He will help us if we

believe His word, if we take Him at His word; can we be saved if we do not? He says, "Look unto Me and be ye saved." The look, the look of faith will save us, but what if we do not look, what if we persist in looking away? It must be the one thing or the other, God is willing to save us; at an infinite sacrifice to Himself has provided salvation for us; do we believe Him, or do we not believe Him? Are we putting our trust in His word and promise, or are we casting discredit upon the word of the Faithful and the True? It is one or the other; we cannot be saved by our own works or merit, we may be saved by faith in the works and

Of the last
importance to
understand
this clearly.

merit of another, and there is no other way of being saved but by this faith. "There is no other name," &c.

We have all been brought up in the atmosphere of this; in the preaching and teaching of it we have become so familiar with this condition of being saved, that we imagine we have complied with the condition. Very few have any doubt about it, and even the most worldly, the least religious would hesitate, and hesitate long, before he would acknowledge himself an unbeliever. In a Christian community we breathe the very atmosphere of salvation by faith, and hence the fatal tendency to think we have exercised the faith on which the salvation depends; the fatal

Are we really
being saved
by faith?

tendency to mistake external hearing of, and familiarity with the doctrine for the vital and energetic individual realisation of it. It is to be feared there

are many, in all our Christian Churches, in the vain imagination that they have believed, who have never believed at all. They have drifted into the delusion because others around them are believers, they fancy themselves to be believers too. And if the apostle James were here again, he would not need to alter or modify any of his words; the same remonstrances, the same rebukes, the same exposures of unreality would be equally in place now: "*What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?*"

This apostle believed in justification by faith and not by works; with him faith is as much the root-principle of all spiritual life

James
accepts the
doctrine.

as it is with Paul, or with any of the apostles, but he sees as they did that it is liable to misconception; he sees that the natural heart, ever ready to rest in mere

forms, will make a form of even such a spiritual thing as salvation by faith; and, apostle of reality, he will set himself to counteract this tendency; like the prophets of old "he will lift up his voice against, and spare not," those who are contentedly imagining they have the faith of the Lord Jesus Christ, when their supposed faith is but the result of their Christian surroundings. When he here speaks of a man who "says" he has faith, he is not thinking of a *conscious hypocrite*, it is of a member of the church who but believes that he believes, and

who vainly "says" it. He singles out one of these, asks us to look at him, perhaps, to find in him an image of ourselves.

But sees it "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man may be 'say' he hath faith, and have not works: can faith be perverted. save him, can faith of that kind save him?"

Observe, this apostle believes in saving faith, is himself resting on the finished work of Jesus Christ; but this is the question to push it to its issue. Is that, can that be called, saving faith which gives no evidence that it exists? Saving faith must be a living faith, and living it will be active, active it will manifest itself, in the very nature of things, it will prove its existence by works. But the faith of the mere "sayer" has nothing of all this! Then of what use is it to him, what profit is there in it? It is dead, and the sooner he knows this the better: knowledge here would be the beginning of salvation. What is the use of calling *that* faith which cannot do the only thing for which faith exists?

You would not "say" a man was charitable or benevolent who, when he saw an ill-clad, starving fellow-man, merely "said" charitable or kindly things to him, who, being in possession of superabundant food and raiment, never gave of his superabundance! Plenty of charitable words, no charitable actions: plenty of sayings, no doings! What profits it, my brethren, though a man "say" he hath a charitable spirit, and have no charitable deeds? This is the illustration the apostle uses to let light upon, and in upon, this saying without doing, this believing and not working; and it is very characteristic of him. It illustrates clearly the matter in hand; but over and above this use of it what a practical lesson in true benevolence, and what a condemnation of all mere sentiments and feelings which, professing to be so interested in the poor and needy, stop short of condensing themselves into actual kindnesses, into deeds of charity and goodwill. Telling, as an illustration, it is quick and powerful as a rebuke. "If a brother or sister be naked or destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled, notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful

for the body, what doth it profit?" The charity which only "says" is a dead charity, and the faith which only "says" is a dead faith, profitless, non-existent. It is a good and serviceable thing to bring a life and death matter like this to a plain and pointed issue. James does not trouble or confuse his readers with subtleties or refinements; he has nothing to say about speculative faith or historical faith; about a faith of the head, or a faith of the heart; he is a plain man, speaking to plain men about a matter too serious to admit of mere discussion. He knows of but one kind of faith—the faith which comes out in appropriate evidences—the faith which has works! There is no other kind, everything else is unbelief, aversion to the truth, and to God;—"Faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone."

The subject is of the last importance, and the apostle will detain the minds of his readers upon it; it is apt to be misunderstood and he will vary his mode of presenting it. Charity without kind deeds is not charity; faith without works is not faith. Is this disputed? Well, then, let it be brought to the test. There is an easy and satisfactory one at hand. You say you have faith, though you have not works: let me see this faith of yours, if the thing exists surely you can let me see it! What kind of thing can that be which cannot in any way show itself? The demand is a common sense one; if a man cannot show his faith, it is because he has no faith to show! Yea, a man may say, I'll meet you on your own ground; I'll take you on your own showing: thou hast faith, and I have works, show me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works. I have works; I have the feelings, and the affections, and the desires, and the outward life, which would not have been but for my faith; and when you ask me to show my faith, to give proof of its existence, I can confidently point to these as its evidences; feelings of filial trust, affectionate gratitude, desires after holiness, deeds of liberality and kindness. I point to these as proofs that I have faith, but you who have none of these and yet who say you have faith, let me see that faith of yours, which can live and energise without any results, without any works, without any fruit! The

Meeting him
on his own
ground.

man is deceiving himself, he is walking in a vain show. When the woman came in the crowd, and timid, shrinking, doubting in her mind, yet touched the hem of the Saviour's garment, she had faith, and showed her faith, very weak and very imperfect, but real! "If I may but touch!" And she drew near, came behind and touched.

It is difficult here while speaking the truth, to speak it in love: while speaking in love, to speak the truth. On the one hand, there are despondent, almost despairing souls who are morbidly prone to seize upon such a word as this, and to say that because

Of some make
a difference.

they have so few evidences within themselves of the presence of faith, or that because they have not the evidences which others have, they have, therefore,

no faith at all; on the other hand, there are those who are ready to take advantage of the hope which is held out to these others, and to appropriate to themselves, and to wrest, to their own destruction, what was never meant for them. Are we, then, for fear of such results, to refrain from comforting those who are in any need of comfort, those to whom this would come like the very comforts of God, that while their faith may be feeble and imperfect, it is yet real, a faith which, therefore, He *approves*, and which He will assuredly *improve*. It will serve a good end to be reminded what the apostle is here exclusively speaking of: faith which has no results; faith which has no gratitude, and no love, and no desire to know the Saviour of the soul. If any one can truly say that he would not give up his hope in Christ for worlds, well, no matter how troubled or desponding he may be, here is evidence of his faith, and he, therefore, is not the man of whom the apostle speaks.

The apostle has still another word to say, the point of which has often been missed. It has been thought that by the expression, "Thou believest that there is one God, thou doest well, the demons also believe and tremble," the apostle means to assert

The principle
is universal.

that the faith of the demons was not saving faith, that though they believed in God, this belief of theirs had no saving effect. This may be true, but

it is not the truth taught here. The whole of the passage is an

argument to show that where there is faith there will be the results, and the appropriate results of faith, that it is impossible there could be faith without these results. If there be faith in a God of mercy who has offered mercy, there will be gratitude and service; a man cannot believe God to be his merciful Saviour, and not love Him; faith in a Saviour *means* love to that Saviour. But the principle is universal wherever faith is, these are the results of that faith. It holds in Heaven, on earth, in hell. The rebel angels believe in God as an Almighty Power whom they hate; well, faith in them has its appropriate results; they tremble, they fear, they cower in terror; this is the work their faith produces, this is the evidence of their faith. If we could be assured the rebel angels had no trembling dread, no fear of God, took no heed of His presence, lived as if He did not exist, should we not instantly conclude that they did not believe in Him, or that they did not believe in His power, His Almighty control?

In Heaven they believe and love; on earth they believe and strive to love, rejoicing in hope; in hell they believe and tremble; no escape from the universal law, the universal fact.

Hear the conclusion of the whole matter, salvation by faith is the offered salvation, and it is the only possible salvation. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: he that believeth not on the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on Him." Let us examine ourselves then, whether we be in the faith, to make sure we are in the faith, in the only satisfactory way, by producing the fruits of faith.

Rejoice with
trembling.

GLASGOW.

PETER RUTHERFORD.

THE WORLD.

"The world's a *book*, writ by th' Eternal art
Of the great Author, *printed* in man's heart;
'Tis falsely *printed*, though divinely *penned*,
And all the *errata* will appear 't the end."

—QUARLES.

SEEDS OF SERMONS ON THE SECOND BOOK OF
THE KINGS.

Aspects of a Corrupt Nation.

"IN THE TWELFTH YEAR OF AHAZ KING OF JUDAH BEGAN HOSHEA THE SON OF ELAH TO REIGN IN SAMARIA OVER ISRAEL NINE YEARS. AND HE DID THAT WHICH WAS EVIL IN THE SIGHT OF THE LORD, BUT NOT AS THE KINGS OF ISRAEL THAT WERE BEFORE HIM. AGAINST HIM CAME UP SHALMANESER KING OF ASSYRIA: AND HOSHEA BECAME HIS SERVANT, AND GAVE HIM PRESENTS. AND THE KING OF ASSYRIA FOUND CONSPIRACY IN HOSHEA: FOR HE HAD SENT MESSENGERS TO SO KING OF EGYPT, AND BROUGHT NO PRESENT TO THE KING OF ASSYRIA, AS HE HAD DONE YEAR BY YEAR: THEREFORE THE KING OF ASSYRIA SHUT HIM UP, AND BOUND HIM IN PRISON. THEN THE KING OF ASSYRIA CAME UP THROUGHOUT ALL THE LAND, AND WENT UP TO SAMARIA, AND BESIEGED IT THREE YEARS. IN THE NINTH YEAR OF HOSHEA THE KING OF ASSYRIA TOOK SAMARIA, AND CARRIED ISRAEL AWAY INTO ASSYRIA, AND PLACED THEM IN HALAH AND IN HAVOR BY THE RIVER OF GOZAN, AND IN THE CITIES OF THE MEDES. FOR SO IT WAS, THAT THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL HAD SINNED AGAINST THE LORD THEIR GOD, WHICH HAD BROUGHT THEM UP OUT OF THE LAND OF EGYPT, FROM UNDER THE HAND OF PHARAOH KING OF EGYPT, AND HAD FEARED OTHER GODS, AND WALKED IN THE STATUTES OF THE HEATHEN, WHOM THE LORD CAST OUT FROM BEFORE THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL, AND OF THE KINGS OF ISRAEL, WHICH THEY HAD MADE."
—2 Kings xvii. 1-8.

HOSHEA, the king here mentioned, was the nineteenth and last king of Israel. He lived about 720 years or more B.C. After a reign of nine years his subjects were carried away captive to Assyria, and the kingdom of Israel came to an end.

The selection we have made

from this chapter presents to us *Aspects of a Corrupt Nation*. A nation appears here as an unfortunate inheritor of wrong, as a guilty worker of wrong, and as a terrible victim of wrong.

I.—AS AN UNFORTUNATE INHERITOR OF WRONG. Upon Hoshea and his age there came

down the corrupting influence of no less than nineteen princes, all of whom were steeped in wickedness and fanatical idolatry. The whole nation had become completely immoral and idolatrous. This king—the last of the Israelitish—it is said, “did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, but not as the kings of Israel that were before him.” If one shade better than his predecessors, he was, notwithstanding, a man whose character seems unredeemed by one single virtue.

It is one of not only the commonest but the most perplexing facts in history that one generation comes to *inherit*, to a great extent, the character of its predecessor. The thoughts, the principles, and the spirit that animated the men of the past, come down and take possession of the minds of the men of the present. Though the bodies of our predecessors are mouldering in the dust they are still here in their thoughts and influences. This is an undoubted fact. It serves to explain three things—

First: *The vital connection between all the members of the*

race. Though men are countless in number, and ever multiplying, humanity is one. All are branches of the same root, members of the same body, links in one chain. None can be affected without affecting others, the motion of one link propagates an influence to the end of the chain. None of us live unto ourselves. Solemn thought! Our very breathings may produce ripples upon the mighty lake of existence, which will spread in ever-widening circles to the very shores of eternity. There are mystic springs connecting us with the universe. Can we move without touching them? Can we give a touch that will not send its vibrations along the arches of the boundless future? The effects of a man's influence, either for good or evil, will be determined by his moral character. A bad man is a moral curse: the influence that streams from him will be moral poison. A good man, under God, is a blessing, his influence, like the living waters, will irrigate and beautify the mental districts through which they flow. Notice—

Secondly: *The immense*

difficulty in improving the moral condition of the race. There have been men in every age and land who have "striven even unto blood" to improve the race. Poets have depicted the charms of virtue, moralists have reasoned against wrong, martyrs have died for the right; and during the last eighteen centuries throughout Christendom, the best men throughout all communions have struggled hard to bring the world's mind under the supreme reign of the true, the beautiful, and the good. But how miserable has been the result! Evil is everywhere the dominant force: dominant not merely in markets and governments, but even in conventional churches. Those of us who have lived longest in the world, looked deepest into its moral heart, and laboured most zealously and persistently for its improvement, feel like Sisypheus, in ancient fable, struggling to roll a large stone to the top of a mountain, which as soon as we think some progress has been made, rolls back to its old position, and that with greater impetuosity. Scripture everywhere recognises this difficulty, and

speaks of the work as a "race," a "battle," a "crucifixion." I question whether the world is morally much better than it has ever been. Notice—

Thirdly: *The absolute need of superhuman agency spiritually to redeem the race.* Philosophy shows that a bad world cannot improve itself, cannot make itself good. Bad men can neither help themselves, morally, or help others. If the world is to be improved, thoughts and influences from superhuman regions must be injected into its heart. Moral goodness must come in a new form, and ply new agencies. Herein is the Gospel: "When we were without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." A corrupt nation is here represented—

II.—AS A GUILTY WORKER OF WRONG. Hoshea and his people were not only the *inheritors* of the corruptions of past generations, but they themselves became agents in propagating and perpetuating the wickedness. See what is said of Hoshea here. "The king of Assyria found conspiracy in Hoshea." This is only one specimen or develop-

ment of this man's wickedness. See what is said of his people. "The Children of Israel had sinned against the Lord their God which had brought them up out of the land of Egypt, from under the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and had feared other gods."

So that while they were the inheritors of a corrupt past, they were at the same time *guilty* agents in a wicked present. Strong as is the influence of the past upon us, it is not strong enough to *coerce* us into wrong. Gracious Heaven has endowed every man with the power of thought and resolve sufficient, if he uses it, to rise above the influence of the past, and to bound into a new moral orbit of life. He has the power to stand on the firm rock of his own individuality, and to say to the swelling sea of depravity, as its waves are approaching him: "So far shalt thou come, and no further." Because the father has been bad there is no *just* reason why the child should be bad also. Because all the generations that have gone have been bad, there is no reason why this generation

should be wicked. We are not like logs of wood on the surging seas of past wickedness, but rather like those snowy birds that can at pleasure mount from the billows, and quit them for the wide fields of air. A corrupt nation is here represented—

III.—AS A TERRIBLE VICTIM OF WRONG. What was the *judicial* outcome of all this wickedness? Retribution came, stern, rigorous, and crushing. "Then the king of Assyria came up throughout all the land, and went up to Samaria, and besieged it three years." "This was the third and final expedition of Shalmaneser against the whole of Syria, and it seems to have been after the lapse of a year or two from his second expedition. What new offence had excited his wrath has not been recorded; but as a determined resistance was made by his refractory vassal, Shalmaneser prepared for a regular siege of Samaria, which, through the stubborn valour of the Israelites themselves, or with the aid of Egyptian troops, lasted for nearly three years. At length the city capitulated; or, if Josephus is correct, was

taken by storm. But the glory of this conquest was not enjoyed by Shalmaneser, who had been suddenly recalled by the outbreak of a domestic revolution occasioned, or at least encouraged, by his protracted absences from his capital. He was dethroned by the insurrection of an ambitious subject, and he seems to have died also before the fall of Samaria."—*Dr. Jameson*. Thus the whole country, one and all, were carried away by tyrannic force. "From inscriptions in the palace at Khorasbad," says a modern expositor, "which record the number of Israelitish captives, it appears that 27,280 were transported into Assyria from Samaria and other parts of the kingdom of Israel. The removal of entire populations from vanquished countries to some other portion of the conqueror's dominions had not been adopted, so far as reliable history testifies, as the policy of any ancient sovereigns in the East until it was introduced and acted upon by the later Assyrian kings. Soldiers when taken captive in battle, women and children belonging to the conquered enemy, it

had, indeed, for ages, been the custom to carry into the land of the victor. And even numerous tribes of foreigners, resident within the territory, and reduced to a state of bondage, like the Israelites in Egypt, had frequently, by the arbitrary will of ancient kings, been dragged to different quarters of their kingdom to labour on the public works."

Here is the *temporal* retribution, at any rate, of two hundred years of idolatry and wickedness. During this period Israel had sinned away its liberty, its property, its country. The ten tribes sinned themselves into slavery, destitution, and everlasting obscurity. For where are they? Two thousand years have rolled away since this terrible catastrophe, and none can tell us who they are or where they are. "Be sure your sins will find you out." Retribution may move silently and slowly, but ever with a resistless step. It follows the sins of a *nation* as well as of an individual. It was the crimes of the Israelites that ruined the kingdom, and made them the victims of this terrible catastrophe. So it ever

is, the great dynasties and kingdoms of the past have met with the same fate by the same inexorable law of retribution. There are sins in our England that are working on its ruin. The sins of a nation work like the subterranean fires under ground. The nation may have arts lovely as the landscape, institutions apparently grand and firm as the old mountains. But whilst

the people revel in their exuberance of resources, their natural beauties, and in the grandeur of their institutions, and that for ages, sin, like an ocean of fire under ground, will one day break out in flames, that will destroy the whole, as in the case of the ten tribes.

DAVID THOMAS, D.D.
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THE NEED, AND NEEDLESSNESS OF FORMS.—“You will find many whose souls you cannot fix or engage unless you engage their senses. Without a doubt, sometimes water, sometimes oil, sometimes a wafer, sometimes the handkerchief of the apostle, and sometimes his shadow have helped men and women to apprehend the virtue of Christ. He was humble enough to interpose even clay as a medium between His children’s faith and Himself. . . . But let no one assert the absolute necessity of forms for Christ,—and the kingdom of heaven often came ‘without observation.’ ‘Be it unto thee according to thy faith.’ . . . Christ is in all forms. And the woman whose faith must needs touch the hem of His garment finds a blessing, no less than the man whose faith requires no visible medium.”—JOHN PULSFORD.

SEEDS OF SERMONS ON THE EPISTLE TO TITUS.

All that we learn in the New Testament of Titus is soon told. He was of Gentile parentage. He accompanied Barnabas and Paul to the Council of Apostles or Elders convened at Jerusalem to consider the question of the obligation of Mosaic ceremonies. Paul sternly refused to have him circumcised according to the wish of the Jewish Christians. He was chosen by Paul as an example of Christian freedom from Jewish rites. He was one of the most active agents in the promulgation of the Gospel, and esteemed by the great Apostle as his "brother," "companion," "son," and "fellow-labourer." He took an active part in collecting for the poor saints at Jerusalem. He was brought by Paul into Crete, and left there to complete the work which the great Apostle had inaugurated. He was to do this, not only by preaching, but by superintending the organisation of the Churches. He seems to have been exceedingly successful in his mission, and won for himself a wide, lasting, and a revered reputation amongst the Cretans.

The letter here addressed to him by Paul was probably written about the same time as that to Timothy, and from the same place, and there can be little doubt that the place was Corinth.

No. I.

Redemptive Truth.

"PAUL, A SERVANT OF GOD, AND AN APOSTLE OF JESUS CHRIST, ACCORDING TO THE FAITH OF GOD'S ELECT, AND THE ACKNOWLEDGING OF THE TRUTH WHICH IS AFTER GODLINESS; IN HOPE OF ETERNAL LIFE, WHICH GOD, THAT CANNOT LIE, PROMISED BEFORE THE WORLD BEGAN; BUT HATH IN DUE TIMES MANIFESTED HIS WORD THROUGH PREACHING, WHICH IS COMMITTED UNTO ME ACCORDING TO THE COMMANDMENT OF GOD OUR SAVIOUR; TO TITUS, MINE OWN SON AFTER THE COMMON FAITH: GRACE, MERCY, AND PEACE, FROM GOD THE FATHER AND THE LORD JESUS CHRIST OUR SAVIOUR."—*Titus* i. 1-4.

THESE words direct our attention to certain phases of redemptive truth. The *substratum* of the Gospel is not merely truth, but *redemptive* truth. Truth, not merely to

enlighten the intellect and to discipline the mental faculties, but to raise the human soul from spiritual ignorance to intelligence, from spiritual bondage to liberty, from

selfishness to benevolence, from materialism to spirituality, from the "prince of darkness" to the true and living God. Here it appears—

I.—AS A GRAND ENTERPRISE.

First: An enterprise *devoted to the highest purpose*. What is the purpose? It is here described (1) As the promotion of the faith of God's elect. "According to the faith of God's elect." The idea is, perhaps, the furtherance of true faith amongst those to whom God had, in the exercise of His sovereignty, sent the Gospel. As a fact, all men have not had the opportunity of receiving the Gospel; indeed, only an insignificant fraction of the race have had it brought to them. This fraction is a class so highly privileged that they may be designated the "elect." Why should they have the Gospel sent to them, and not others? Ask why some should inherit health, others disease; some wealth, others poverty; some intellectual powers of a high order, others minds but little removed from brute intelligence. "All these worketh the self-same Spirit devising to every man severally as He

will." Now, to further and promote faith among those to whom the Gospel goes is one of its grand purposes. The purpose is here described (2) As the promotion of the knowledge "of the truth which is after (according to) godliness." More accurately rendered, "The knowledge of the truth which is beside, or which leadeth to godliness."—*Ellis-cott*. The grand purpose here indicated, seems to be that all who are Divinely favoured with the Gospel should so believe it, and practise it, that they may become godly in their lives. What a sublime design is this, to make men God-like, as it is expressed in the next chapter, "The grace of God hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world."

Secondly: An enterprise *employing the highest human agency*. "Paul, a servant of God, an apostle of Jesus Christ." "Paul's mode of designating himself here," says *Dr. Fairbairn*, "does not exactly coincide with his form of expression in any other epistle. Elsewhere he calls

himself a servant, a bondman of Christ (Rom. i. 1; Gal. i. 10; Phil. i. 1; Col. iv. 12), but here only of God. A noteworthy variation, not on its own account, but as a mark of genuineness; for it is impossible to conceive what motive could have induced any imitator to depart in such a manner from the apostle's usual phraseology. The *δέ* coupling his calling as an apostle of Christ with his relation to God as a servant, cannot be taken in an adversative sense, for there is really no opposition; but it is used, as not unfrequently, to subjoin something new, different and distinct from what precedes, though not strictly opposed to it."

Paul was one of the greatest of men. In natural endowments, penetrating insight, vigour of thought, logical force, and rhetoric aptitude, he had in his age but few equals. His acquirements, too, were great. Brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, acquainted with Grecian culture, and master of Rabbinic law, he could stand side by side with the greatest reasoners, sages, and orators

of his time. But, beyond all this, he was specially called and qualified by God for propagating the Gospel of His Son. There is no enterprise on this earth demanding a higher kind of human agency than the Gospel, nor (notwithstanding the mental feebleness and the moral meanness of the thousands in every age who have worked, and are working, in connection with it) can there be found a higher class of men, both intellectual and moral, than some who have been, and still are, employed in indoctrinating men with the truths of the Gospel. Look at redemptive truth—

II.—AS A TRANSCENDENT PROMISE. "In hope of eternal life which God, that (who) cannot lie, promised before the world began (times eternal)." This promise is—

First: Transcendent in *value*. "Eternal life." This means something more than an endless existence. An interminable existence might be an interminable curse. It means not only an existence without end, but an existence without *evil*, without sin, error, sorrow, misery. Aye, and more than this, an endless

existence in connection with *good*, and with good only, with knowledge, holiness, liberty, and companionship with the best created spirits, and with the great God Himself. Eternal life is eternal goodness. The promise is—

Secondly: Transcendent in *certitude*. It is made by God, "that CANNOT LIE." Are not all things possible with Him? Yes, in what may be called a physical sense. It is possible for Him to destroy, in the twinkling of an eye, the present creation, and to produce a new one. But, in a moral sense, there is an impotency. His "cannot," here is His will not, and His *will not* is His glory. A higher eulogy you cannot pronounce on any man than to say he cannot be ungenerous, he cannot be false, he cannot be unjust, he cannot be dishonourable. Inability to do wrong is the glory of the Infinite. This promise, then, cannot fail; it must be realised. "Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away." The promise is—

Thirdly: Transcendent in *age*. "Promised before the world began (times eternal)."

When was that? Before the foundation of the earth was laid, or the wheels of time began their revolutions. When He occupied the boundlessness of immensity alone. The Gospel is an old promise: "the Lamb was slain before *the foundation of the world*." The Gospel is not a threat but a promise. Look at redemptive truth—

III.—AS A GRADUAL REVELATION. "But hath in due times (in His own seasons) manifested His word through preaching (in the message) which is committed unto me (wherewith I was entrusted) according to the commandment of God our Saviour." There are three thoughts here suggested concerning the revelation of this promise of eternal life.

First: It was manifested *at a proper time*. "In due times (in His own seasons) manifested His word." God has a season for everything, everything in the material and the moral. Nothing but sin appears in His universe that does not come "according to His time." Oceans ebb and flow, planets perform their revolutions, kingdoms rise and

fall, generations come and go "according to His time." He had a time for the revelation of His redemptive truth, and when the time dawned it beamed on the world.

Secondly : It was manifested by *apostolic preaching*. "Through preaching." Redemptive truth came into the world through man, and it is heaven's design that it should be propagated through the world by man. It is to be preached, not only with the lips, but by the life. The true preacher must incarnate it. His life must illustrate and confirm the doctrine that his lips declare. It was before the Gospel came to men in written documents that it won its greatest victories. Some think that too much importance is attached to the Bible in this work, and that it is vain to expect that the circulation of the Scriptures will answer the end. History shows it has not done so, and the philosophy of the work explains the reason, hence it must be revealed in the voice and the life.

Thirdly : It was manifested by *the Divine command* "Which was committed unto

me (wherewith I was intrusted) according to the commandment of God our Saviour." The Divine command came to the Apostle to preach the Gospel at various times, came to him on the road to Damascus, came to him in the Temple at Jerusalem, came to him in the ship on the Adriatic. Yes, the Divine command comes to all,—“Go into all the world and preach the Gospel.” Not only was it by command that Paul preached it to mankind, but now to Titus. Look at redemptive truth—

IV.—AS A LOVE-BEGETTING POWER. “To Titus, mine own son (my true child) after the common faith.” “Mine own son!” What an endearing expression. The Gospel converter becomes the father in the highest and divinest sense of the converted. No relation so close, vital, and tender as the spiritual relation of souls. Paul’s desire is, for Titus, “Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour.” Here is the wish of heavenly philanthropy, a philanthropy that embraces the complete and everlasting

well-being of its object.
Having the "grace, peace, and
mercy" of God we have
everything we require, we
have "all and abound."

CONCLUSION. — Prize this

redemptive truth, practise this
redemptive truth, preach this
redemptive truth. It is the
"power of God unto salvation."

DAVID THOMAS, D.D.

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BUDDHIST BEATITUDES.

"Not to serve the foolish,
But to serve the wise ;
To honour those worthy of honour,
This is the greatest blessing.

"Much insight and education,
Self-control and pleasant speech,
And whatever word is well-spoken,
This is the greatest blessing.

"To support father and mother,
To cherish wife and child,
To follow a peaceful calling,
This is the greatest blessing.

"To bestow alms and live righteously,
To give help to kindred,
Deeds which cannot be blamed,
This is the greatest blessing.

"To abhor and cease from sin,
Abstinence from strong drink,
Not to be weary in well-doing,
This is the greatest blessing.

"Reverence and lowliness,
Contentment and gratitude, [sons,
The hearing of the Law at due sea-
This is the greatest blessing.

"To be long-suffering and meek,
To associate with the tranquil,
Religious talk at due seasons,
This is the greatest blessing.

"Beneath the stroke of life's changes,
The mind that shaketh not,
Without grief or passion, and secure,
This is the greatest blessing.

"On every side are invincible,
They who do act like these ;
On every side they act in safety,
And this is the greatest blessing."

Seedlings.

Homiletic Glances at Psalm cxix.

BY REV. DAVID THOMAS, D.D.

Man's Bodily Life.

"MY SOUL IS CONTINUALLY IN MY HAND."—*Ps.* cxix. 109.

LET the word "*soul*" here stand for man's bodily life, and then we have two thoughts suggested—

I.—It is something OUTSIDE OF HIMSELF. It is something that he carries in his "*hand*"; something that is his, not him. The human frame, with its complicated parts, and various organs, is no more the man than the house is the resident, the costume the wearer, the harp the lyrist. We carry it in our "*hand*." It is suggested concerning man's bodily life that—

II.—It is something THAT HE MUST SURRENDER. Generally, what we carry in our hands, we do not intend to hold for ever; we have no purpose permanently to retain it. The figure may imply two things—

First: A sense of *temporariness*. The body is only ours for a time. We must lay it down by necessity. The figure may imply—

Secondly: A sense of *obligation*. When a man is about to present a thing to another, he takes it in his hand. We should always be ready to present our bodies, as well as our souls and spirits a sacrifice unto God.

The Divine Word.

"THY TESTIMONIES HAVE I TAKEN AS A HERITAGE FOR EVER."
—*Ps.* cxix. 111.

Look at the Divine Word—

I.—As an INHERITANCE. "*A heritage for ever.*" As an inheritance,

First: It is the most *enjoyable*. Earthly inheritances are not necessarily enjoyable. Their enjoyableness depends upon the mental and moral conditions of their possessors. Sometimes they yield nothing but anxieties, cankering cares, and miseries. But in the Divine thoughts there are joys unalloyed, pure, and ecstatic. As an inheritance—

Secondly: It is the most *extensive*. The Word of God goes back to the origin of all things; embraces all from the beginning, and runs on through the interminable future: its range is immeasurable. As an inheritance—

Thirdly: It is the most *enduring*. All earthly heritages pass from men, and men from them. But the Word of the Lord “abideth for ever.” Look at the Divine Word—

II.—As an inheritance ONLY PERSONALLY ATTAINED. “*Thy testimonies have I taken.*” Earthly inheritances often come to men irrespective of effort or choice. But he who would enjoy this inheritance must choose it and win it by his own struggles under God.

The Hated and the Loved.

“I HATE VAIN THOUGHTS, BUT THY LAW DO I LOVE.”—*Psalm* cxix. 113.

NOTICE here—

I.—The HATED. “*I hate vain thoughts.*” The number of these is legion, the variety all but endless. Vain thoughts may include worthless thoughts on true subjects, as well as on false. Vain thoughts are—

First: Always *worthless*. They are empty, vapid, unsatisfactory, and unenduring.

Secondly: Always *criminal*. Man is endowed with the thinking faculty in order to think accurately, righteously, and devoutly.

Thirdly: Always *pernicious*. Vain thoughts are the weeds, the fungi, the parasites, the mildew of the soul. Notice here—

II.—The LOVED. “*Thy law do I love.*” Here, then, is the hateable and the loveable. Why should the Divine law be loved?

First: It is a *revelation of the morally beautiful*. It is the transcript of the Mind, that which is the “beauty of holiness.”

Secondly: It is a *guide to the truly happy*. It is a map to guide to the heavenly inheritance, a compass directing to the celestial shore.

This hatred, and this love are vitally conjoined. He who loves the law must “hate vain thoughts.” Love for the good by a necessity generates hatred for the evil.

God a Shield for the Good.

“MY SHIELD.”—*Psalm* cxix. 114.

“FEAR not, Abraham, I am thy shield.” Here is—

I.—A SUFFICIENTLY EXPANSIVE shield. A shield large enough to protect the wearer from all attacks whithersoever they proceed, from

behind or before, the right or the left. Here is—

II.—AN ABSOLUTELY IMPERVIOUS shield. No arrow, sword, ball, or javelin can penetrate this shield. Here is—

III.—A TERRIBLY REPELLANT shield. Every ball shot, every dart flung, every blow struck on this shield rebounds, falls back and crushes the assailant. God, Himself, is the safe Guardian of souls, and He alone.

A Great Good and a Great Evil.

“LET ME NOT BE ASHAMED OF MY HOPE.”—*Psalm cxix.* 116.

HERE is—

I.—A great GOOD. Hope. This is one of the most priceless gems in conscious life. It always implies three things.

First: A *future*. It is a prospective emotion, its eye is always glancing forward. In whatever mind it exists it always implies a belief in a future. It always implies—

Secondly: A *good* in the future. Men always hope only for the desirable. They may expect the undesirable, but never hope for it.

Thirdly: It always implies a good in the future that is *attainable*. Hope is an expectant desire, a rational man would never hope for a good which he regards as

utterly unattainable. Hope, we say, is one of the greatest blessings in life. It goes to the pauper, and tells him of better days, to the sufferer on his couch, and cheers him with the promise of health, to the prisoner in his cell, and beguiles him with the visions of liberty. Well does *Goldsmith* say—

“The wretch condemned with life to
part
Still, still on hope relies,
And every pang that rends the heart
Bids expectation rise.”

Here is—

II.—A great EVIL. Shame. “*Let me not be ashamed.*” Shame is one of the most painful of all our emotions. Some are ashamed of that which cannot be helped, ashamed of the poverty of their ancestry, the supposed uncomeliness of their person, or of the condition in which they have been placed in life. Some are ashamed of that in which they ought to rejoice, ashamed even of the Gospel. Some are ashamed of that of which they have been guilty. This is remorse, and remorse is misery.

“I can bear scorpions’ stings, tread
fields of fire,
In frozen gulfs of cold eternal lie;
Be toss’d aloft through tracts of
endless void,
But cannot live in shame.”

JOANNA BAILLIE.

Here is—

III.—A great evil RISING OUT OF A GREAT GOOD. "*Let me not be ashamed of my hope.*" We are ashamed of our hope—

First: When the object has proved to be *worthless*.

Secondly: When the object has proved to be *unattainable*. When the conviction comes to a man that the object he has been hoping for is worthless and vile, or, if good, utterly unattainable in its nature, there will flame out in his breast the scorplings of shame. Thus, after all, this hope which, in itself is a blessing, often turns out the source of enormous distress. Were there no hopes, there would be no disappointments. And disappointments fill the mind with distress. The old Arabian, Zophar, represented the loss of hope as the "giving up of the ghost." It is like death. What the soul is to the body, the dominant hope is to the soul; the inspirer of its energies, and the spring of its being. When the spirit leaves

the body, the body falls to dust; when hope leaves the soul, the soul is in ruins.

Copious Tears of Piety and Philanthropy.

"RIVERS OF WATER RUN DOWN MINE EYES, BECAUSE THEY KEEP NOT THY LAW."—*Ps. cxix. 136.*

TEARS, what are they? The involuntary expressions of tender emotions which the tongue fails to communicate. The briny crystal globules are mirrors of the heart. No language is so powerful as the language of a tear. It is an eloquence that goes right from heart to heart. The strongest men have been broken down, ere now, by the tear of a timid woman.

"Since man was born to trouble here below,
Tears were provided for predestined woe;
And tears have fallen in perpetual shower
From man's apostasy until this hour."

ABRAHAM COLES.

Days of the Christian Year.

Matthew ix. 20-22.

(*Twenty-fourth Sunday after Trinity.*)

THIS beautiful and touching incident is suggestive of many things: it may remind us of—

I. — THE INSUFFICIENCY OF EARTHLY GOOD. This poor woman,

who may have had fair prospects of a happy life, but whose hope was spoilt by a lingering disease which sapped her strength and wasted her substance (Mark v. 26), is the type of all those who find themselves vainly struggling

against adverse fortunes. When we take into our thought all that the sons and daughters of men endure through poverty, excessive toil, pain and weakness, anxiety and disappointment, bereavement and estrangement, loneliness and separation, the sense of wrong suffered at the hand of others, &c., &c., we may well ask whether life is worth living apart from the comfort, the enlargement, the illumination, the hope which are found in, or proceed from, the service of God, the faith and love which are in Jesus Christ.

II.—THE SICKNESS OF SIN. All sickness is strikingly typical of sin: *sin is the soul's disorder*. It is the condition in which the faculties are actively engaged in *doing* that for which they were *not* created, or—and this is more common, both in type and anti-type—*failing* to do that for which they *were* created. The result of this spiritual disorder, answering to the consequences of disease in the bodily form, is (1) pain of heart—weariness, misery, remorse, (2) weakness—incapacity to run, or even to walk in the ways of righteousness or usefulness, (3) death.

III.—THE TRIUMPH OF SPIRITUAL EARNESTNESS. Evidently this poor trembling woman had great obstacles to overcome before she could get into close and

healing contact with the Divine Physician; but her strenuous earnestness triumphed over them all. There may be many hindrances, in our hearts or in our circumstances, which lie between us and a redeeming Saviour; but, if we are thoroughly in earnest, we shall certainly surmount them. They need not keep us from restoration now, and they will be no sufficient plea hereafter.

IV.—THE POWER OF A LIVING FAITH. The faith of this woman was not, probably, a very intelligent one; she thought that if she touched the sacred fringe of His garment she would be cured, and that she might extract virtue from the Prophet without His consciousness and consent. But, though tainted with superstition, her faith in Christ was genuine, and it was accepted; she was “made whole.” Our faith may be unintelligent, imperfect, mingled with much that is faulty, but, if we come into close, living, abiding contact with the Saviour-Sovereign of man, we shall escape from the thralldom and the penalty of sin: our heart will become sound in the sight of God; we shall be in the way of becoming perfectly “whole.”

V.—THE DUTY OF OPEN DECLARATION. The “but,” of verse 22, refers to the fact that Jesus did not allow the healed one to go

home without acknowledgement of the benefit she had received (see Mark v. and Luke viii.) It is not His will that we should receive an inestimably greater mercy at His healing hand and not declare to others the supreme blessing He has conferred upon us.

WILLIAM CLARKSON, B.A.
BRISTOL.

John vi. 12.

(*Twenty-fifth Sunday after Trinity.*)

"GATHER UP THE FRAGMENTS
. . . THAT NOTHING BE LOST."

THESE words of our Lord, respecting the fragments, may well suggest to us some thoughts on the attitude of Christianity towards that which is little. We remark—

I.—THAT CHRISTIANITY IS AN INSPIRATION RATHER THAN A CODE. If it were possible to devise rules covering all the particulars of human conduct, and to get those rules obeyed, we might still be a long way off the realization of the thought of Christ. The essence of His religion is not found in propriety of behaviour, but in the possession of a reverent, pure, and loving spirit.

II.—THAT CHRISTIANITY CONCERNS ITSELF WITH PRINCIPLES RATHER THAN PARTICULARS. Jesus Christ instituted very little indeed. He prescribed very little. When we

seek for literal support for our favourite institutions, or practices, from His words, we fail to find it. So, when we search for literal condemnation of the ways and methods we desire to abolish. Our Lord has left us a few living principles which we must, ourselves, apply to all the varying conditions and relations in which we are placed; principles of righteousness, devotion, truthfulness, love, &c. These will amply suffice if we be sincerely bent on making the application according to His mind. But, at the same time, it is true—

III.—THAT CHRISTIANITY INCLUDES A CONSCIENTIOUS ATTENTION TO THE SMALLEST THINGS. A supreme desire to honour God, to please Christ, will lead to a serious endeavour to do the right thing, and to speak the true word at all times and in all relations. A pure and Christian love for man will lead to a determination to act fairly and considerately toward every one with whom we have to do. The spirit of consecration, the principles of righteousness will end in a conscientious carefulness which reaches to the humblest details of our life. If we are walking with, and are serving under Christ, we shall not only "distribute the loaves" but "gather up the fragments." This will be true of (*a*) *leisure hours*, or fragments of time: we shall

resolve to spend these unto Christ, either in devotion, or in usefulness, or in self-improvement, or in true and real recreation. (b) *Conversation*, or fragments of speech: not only the religious discourse, and the prepared speech, but the incidental and familiar table-talk will be governed by Christian principles, and made contributory to worth and wisdom. (c) *Small pecuniary resources*, or fragments of mercy: not only the gold and the silver, but the pence also are His; not only are the rich and the well-to-do, but the poor also, are invited and expected to "cast into the treasury." (d) *The "little ones among men,"* or fragments of society. Our Lord commended to us, with peculiar tenderness, those whom He called the "little ones;" these are not only the children, but all those who, for any reason, are likely to be disregarded by their fellows—the dependent, the feeble-minded, the sickly, those who have been reduced in circumstances, those that render the more menial services. These, and such as they, are "fragments to be gathered," small things to be appropriated for Christ, trifles for His treasury, souls to be led into His kingdom, and secured for His service.

WILLIAM CLARKSON, B.A.

BRISTOL.

Matthew viii. 4.

(*Twenty-sixth Sunday after Trinity.*)

JESUS had just performed His first miracle of healing. The leper the symbol of the sinner. Many details of sad analogy. Here Jesus is virtually saying to the cleansed leper, "Be recognised as healed." "Go shew yourself to the priest," meant let him see and certify that you are a healed and purified man. If leprosy is so fit a type of sin, this injunction to go and show himself to the priest may be taken as a type of *the confession of spiritual cure*. This profession of personal religion is—

I.—AN ACT OF OBEDIENCE TO THE DIVINE WILL. This is taught by implication (1) in the New Testament injunction, "Come out from among them," &c., and (2) in such statements as "The Lord added to the Church daily," &c. "They first gave their own selves to the Lord and then to us;" and (3) in the conduct of the earliest disciples. They attached themselves openly to Christ, and consorted with one another. "Being let go he went to his own company."

II.—AN AID IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF HUMAN CHARACTER. We expect to find the Divine regulations always beneficial to men, for the words of Moses are an axiom of

God's procedure, "His commandments are for our good alway." In the instance before us, as in personal profession of religion, there is an aid (1) *to humility*. It was good for a man to have to acknowledge, I was diseased, unclean, a leper. So it is good for a man to confess, I was a sinner; undone, lost. "I have sinned." (2) *To courage*. That this leper should have to say to a Jewish priest, that Jesus of Nazareth had healed him, was a tax upon his courage, a demand upon his manhood. Similarly though there be seldom the lion of persecution tracking the young professor of religion, there is the keen-eyed lynx of censoriousness. The man who sets up his banners in the name of God, steps on to a battle field even in this age and country.

III.—A WITNESS TO THE POWER AND LOVE OF CHRIST. Clearly this leper would become an eloquent witness to the fact that Jesus could, and would, cleanse. Such a confession was a tribute to the Messiahship of the despised Nazarene. Thus is it with every man who openly acknowledges that he owes his virtue, his victories (whatever they are) not to his constitution, not to society, but to Christ. Honour the church as the hospital in which you have been healed, if indeed the services of the sanctuary have blessed you.

But, above all, bear testimony to the skill and care of the Great Physician, if, indeed, your humble but confident consciousness is that His touch has healed you. Such tributes men publicly utter when they profess personal religion. But this profession is—

IV.—A MEANS OF BLESSING THE WORLD AND OF STRENGTHENING THE CHURCH. That leper would, by his acknowledgment, encourage many a helpless leper to seek the same cure; and would confirm the constancy and revive the enthusiasm of those who had already been restored. (1) The propaganda of evil is open, ceaseless, and mighty. So must the propaganda of goodness be as ceaseless, as open, and more mighty. (2) Science has its associations, social life its clubs, for similar and yet higher purposes Christianity has its Church. Enter it now. EDITOR.

John vi. 5-14.

(*Twenty-seventh Sunday after Trinity.*)

IN this miracle we can scarcely avoid discerning a type of all harvests, both material and moral. For alike in the miracle and in annual harvests, and in the provisions of the Gospel for human souls, there are these few distinguishing characteristics.

I.—THE SATISFACTION OF HUMAN NEEDS. Jesus wrought this miracle to meet the hunger of the multitudes. It was no craving for luxury, but distinct and common human need that He recognised and satisfied. So upon the annual harvests of the world hang the actual lives of millions. No bread; no life. And so yet again is it in the provision of the Gospel. Through the sins of the race humanity has become morally emaciated. Famishing for true food, it often in ignorance seeks to satisfy itself with "that which is not bread." "Husks that the swine eat" are often its coveted food. The religion of Jesus meets alike the needs of the famished soul, and the healthy appetite of the godly. There are teachings here, grace here, a spirit here of which no man can partake and yet languish and die. There is The Christ revealed, who is Himself Bread of Life; Bread of Heaven; Bread of God. The food with which He met the hunger of the thousands on the mountain is but a hint of the nourishment He provides in His Gospel for human souls. There is in all three alike—

II.—THE MULTIPLICATION OF MUCH FROM LITTLE. The provisions a little boy could carry, became under Christ's hands, a feast for thousands. Similarly, and the analogy is very suggestive in many

details, the bushels of seed-corn of one season become the waggon loads of the harvest home of another. Every year finds this miracle exceeded in amount, though not paralleled in time. The annual miracle has grown cheap simply because we imagine we understand how months can accomplish what minutes only accomplished then. But in the sphere of the provisions of the Gospel do we not see similar productiveness, and sometimes in the shorter though sometimes in the longer time? A word is spoken, as it seems to us, and a man begins to live the eternal life. A sermon from a fisherman, and three thousand souls are added to the Church. A tract, a prayer, a hymn, a service, and out of them blossom and ripen a man's heaven. In all three alike is there—

III.—THE AFFLUENCE OF DIVINE PROVISIONS. Everyone can understand how the bounty with which Jesus met the wants of the travel-tired multitudes would cheer and inspire them far more than if there had been but a meagre or just sufficient supply. Stint, or the striving just to overtake the necessities of the hour would have made them feel rather as paupers before Workhouse Guardians, than friends at a Great Friend's bountiful festival. So also the supplies of Nature are affluent.

Ears of corn that bend their stalks, clusters of grape that weigh down the vine, fruit that threatens to break the boughs, shoals of fish in the sea, corn-fields that would girdle the globe, such are nature's supplies. Nor are the resources of the Gospel of Christ less gloriously ample. Every form of thought, every tone of feeling, every aspect of grace is here. The apostle rejoices in "the fulness" in Christ—in His "unsearchable riches." The provisions of Christianity are (1) not for one part of man's nature ; but for his entire being. Nor are they (2) for some few souls, but for all men in all centuries, lands, and conditions. In all three alike there is—

IV.—THE LAW OF TRUE ECONOMY. Lavish as Jesus was, He was never extravagant. "Gather up fragments." So Nature is generous, but never wasteful.

The decay alike of rock and of leaf serves for the soil and mould of fresh forests, and flowers, and fruit. The affluent sunlight that perchance fell upon scanty populations cycles of ages ago, was stored up by frugal Nature to give us the heat, and light, and force of coal to-day. Waste is wickedness. If there were no wilful waste of land, of corn, of fish, there need never lie on God's earth a starving man, a famished woman, a squalid child. Thus is it in the realm of religion. There should be no waste there. Let no thought of Christ "be lost," no word of His "be lost," no Bible "be lost," no ray of Christian influence "be lost." All are too precious, for, like the feast on the mountain, they are the productions of Christ. And all are wanted, for starving, famished, squalid souls are crying for the Bread of God. EDITOR.

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A wise man should constantly discharge all the moral duties, though he perform not constantly the ceremonies of religion ; since he falls low, if, while he performs ceremonial acts only, he discharge not his moral duties.—*The Ordinances of Menu.*

Oh ! with what difficulty are the means  
Acquired, that lead us to the springs of knowledge !  
And when the path is found, ere we have trod  
Half the long way—poor wretches, we must die.

GOETHE.

## Pulpit Handmaids.

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PITH OF GREAT SERMONS BY GREAT PREACHERS.

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### The Gospel and the Poor.

H. P. LIDDON, D.D., Canon of St. Paul's.

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"THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS UPON ME, BECAUSE HE HATH ANOINTED ME TO PREACH THE GOSPEL TO THE POOR."—*Luke iv. 18.*

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It is not, perhaps, too bold to say of this sentence that it is the motto of our Lord's ministry. The passage plainly refers to the year of jubilee, which at somewhat distant intervals came as a season of benevolence and grace to heal the social wounds of Israel. The blessings of the jubilee were earthly shadows of the blessings of Redemption; and the herald of the jubilee foretold by Isaiah is clearly not the prophet himself, but that Other Figure who is so often before us in Isaiah's later writings; He is the Servant of the Lord, at once distinct from the prophet and greatly raised above him. And thus when, His task being over, Jesus had folded the roll, and had given it to the minister, and had sat down, and the eyes of all that were in the Synagogue were fastened on Him, He began to say unto them, "This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears." There could be no mistake as to His meaning. He Himself was the Preacher whom Isaiah had foretold; and His message was the predicted announcement of good tidings to the poor.

That our Lord's ministry was eminently a ministry for the poor is a commonplace which need not be insisted on. His relations were poor people, with the associations, the habits, the feelings of the poor. He passed among men as "the carpenter's son." He spoke, it would appear, in a provincial north-country dialect, at least commonly. His language, His illustrations, His entire method of approaching the understandings and hearts of men, were suited to the apprehension of the uneducated. So it

was with His earliest Church. The Church of the apostles was a Church of the poor; of silver and gold it had none.

I.—This is mere history; it lies upon the surface of the New Testament. But notice the marked connection, in this and other passages, between the preaching of the Gospel to the poor and the gift of the Eternal Spirit. Such a purpose, in so great a gift, looks, at first sight, like an unnecessary expenditure of force. Why, men may ask, should this Almighty Visitor be thus associated with such a humble effort? Why should the Spirit not reserve Himself to dissipate the objections of the intellectual, or the fastidiousness of the highly born, or the pride of the wealthy? Poverty without a faith and rule of life, poverty without any illuminating principle to turn it to moral account, may well appear to be almost unmitigated misfortune; for poverty does not of itself promote either religion or any of the higher interests of human beings. It may do good to those of us who, through no merit of our own, have entered upon life under very different circumstances, if we forget for a few minutes the ancient East, and contemplate some of the most obvious results of poverty in the lives of many thousands of our countrymen.

1. *A first effect of poverty, then, is the confiscation of a poor man's best time and thought, from sheer necessity, to the task of providing food and clothing for himself and his family.* Who does not see how this liability must clog and depress the human spirit; how it chokes up the avenues through which even natural light and heat penetrate within the understanding and the heart?

2. *Another effect of poverty is that it often blights those domestic scenes of happiness which prepare the way of religion in the soul.* In the natural course of things, kindness, courtesy, refinement, are the products of home life; the home is the centre and the manufactory of these natural graces. Many of us must have visited cabins in which a numerous family inhabits a single room; in which the young, the aged, the sick, the hale, the parents and children, herd together by day and by night; in which the mother, who should be a presiding genius of kindness and of cleanliness, is the representative of ill-humour and of

dirt; in which all that protects ordinary intercourse against coarseness, and ordinary tempers against irritation, and average health against disease, and modest efforts to improve against brutal interference, is too often absent; in which all is so crowded that there is no room for delicacy, for reserve, for the charities, for the proprieties of common life.

3. *The worst result of poverty is that it often destroys self-respect.* Poverty of course is and means a great deal more than has thus been stated. But at least let us bear in mind that it involves, very commonly, the exhaustion of life by mechanical work, the degradation of character in the home, and in the usual expedients to escape from it, and the loss of self-respect, and of all that that loss implies, through the continued, unappeased, ever-increasing envy of the lot of others. Not that poverty has not produced its heroes, who have vanquished its disadvantages with stern determination. We have here to consider, not the splendid exceptions, but the average result.

But for more important results a higher force is needed; nothing less than the Christian faith itself. The faith of Christ reverses the disadvantages of poverty with decisive force. It acts upon poverty not from without, but from within; it begins not with legislation, but with hearts and minds; not with circumstances, but with convictions. When this faith is received, it forthwith transfigures the idea of labour: labour is no longer deemed a curse, but a discipline; work of all kinds is sensibly ennobled by being done with, and for, Jesus Christ; and by this association it acquires the character of a kind of worship.

II.—From what has been said it will have been inferred that the work of preaching the Gospel to the poor is very far from being either commonplace or easy; let us briefly notice two mistakes which have been made in undertaking it.

1. *It has failed sometimes from a lack of sympathy with the mental condition and habits of the poor.* An educated man looks at his religion, not merely as a rule of thought and life, but as a theory or doctrine about the Unseen, about the universe, about human nature.

But it is not this way of approaching or exhibiting Christianity

which wins the poor. In the questions which are debated between Revelation and particular schools of criticism, or mental or physical science, the poor have generally no part. The poor need religion, not as additional material for speculative enterprise, but as a friend who can help them along the road of life, and through the great change beyond it. For them life is always real. Its hopes, its misgivings, its joys, its heartaches, its catastrophes, its dim sense of the seriousness of being where and what we are, and of the possibilities before us, are quickened by poverty. The poor man, if religious at all, must believe in One who is not less an object of affection and obedience, than the most awful and sublime of intellectual truths. And therefore, in order to win the poor, religion must ever study to be such as she was on His lips who spoke in parables and simple sayings, and who taught all who listened as they were able to bear it.

2. The other mistake referred to has lain in an opposite direction. *Men who have sympathised warmly with the mental difficulties of the poor have endeavoured to recommend the Christian faith, sometimes by making unwarranted or semi-legendary additions to it, and sometimes by virtually mutilating it.*

These considerations, then, may lead us to reflect that the connexion implied in the text between the presence of the Spirit and the task of evangelizing the poor, is not, after all, so surprising. To be sympathetic, yet sincere; true to the message which has come from Heaven, yet alive to the difficulties of conveying it to untutored minds and hearts; sensible of the facilities which a few unauthorised additions or mutilations would lend to the work in hand, yet resolved to decline them,—this is not easy. For such a work something higher is needed than natural quickness of wit or strength of will, even His aid who, as on this day, taught the peasants of Galilee, in the upper chamber, to speak as with tongues of fire, and in languages which men of many nations could understand. And the effort for which He thus equipped them continues still; and His aid, adapted to new circumstances, is present with us as it was with them. Never was that aid, never was this work, more needed than in our own generation.

ANALYSIS BY THE EDITOR.

## Suggestions for Science Parables.

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"Two worlds are our's, 'tis only sin  
Forbids us to desery,  
The mystic Earth and Heaven within,  
Clear as the sea or sky."

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### PERSISTENCY OF FORCE; REUNION AND RECOGNITION IN HEAVEN.

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*"Because I live, ye shall live also."*

THE late Bishop of St. David's, Dr. Copplestone, was asked what were his views of the doctrine of "recognition in heaven." In his reply, whilst admitting that it is not explicitly taught in the New Testament, yet affirmed that it is implied and assumed throughout. The analogy he draws is alike true and forcible. "It is, I am aware, hazardous to reason from physical to spiritual laws of being; but I am struck by an analogy which seems to favour the belief, which cheers so many bereaved hearts. The great physical doctrine, on which men of science appear to be either quite agreed or rapidly coming to an agreement, is that of the conversation or (as it has been proposed to call it) *persistence of forces*, or force. No force is ever lost, but only passes into a new form. Motion becomes heat. When the fall of the hammer is arrested by the anvil, there is a sudden cessation of a more or less rapid motion; but it is invisibly prolonged by an inward vibration, which changes the temperature of the anvil, and which, if iron was sensative, would be accompanied by acute pain.

. . . Then, I would ask, are not love and friendship forces? Very real spiritual forces, which, in the present state, subsist (persist) through all the changes—outward and inward—of our mortal life. Is it to be thought that they are more liable to perish than those which are employed in making a horseshoe? And, if they are indestructible, can it be conceived that they are to remain for ever without an appropriate object?"

In support of the Bishop's view we may add, referring to the motto at the head of this article, that our everlasting union with Christ is the pledge of the renewal and perpetuation of Christian fellowship. "The fact that the soul-life took root in the same soil, was nurtured by the same joys and sorrows, and hardened amid the same struggles, will supply a common ground on which friends in heaven, once friends on earth, may meet again, and feed the life to come with storied memories of the old life that has for ever passed away, or, rather, has flowed into their perfect life."

T. BROUGHTON KNIGHT.

## Selected Acorns from a Stalwart Oak.

BISHOP THIRLWALL.

“The smallest living *acorn* is fit to be the parent of *oak-trees* without end.”

—*Carlyle.*

THE LONELINESS OF WOE.—“The afflicted one stands within a circle of images and feelings of his own, which, painful as they may be, he would not part with for worlds. Any attempt to draw him out of that circle can only inflict a useless annoyance.”

JUDICIOUS COMFORT.—“Every judicious attempt at consolation must, I think, set out with a full acknowledgment of the right, the value and dignity of the sorrow, and then go on to show that it is only the shady side of a great privilege and blessing, from which it can only be separated by mental abstraction.”

ALIKE AND EQUALLY SELFISH.—“Selfishness is *one common property of human nature*. The difference between a good and bad man is not that the good man is the less selfish of the two, but that he is able to control, by higher motives, or by the force of benevolent affections, the selfishness to which the other yields.”

OLD AGE.—“The decline of life can never know again the freshness of the spring, but it may have its *Indian summer*, even more delicious in its deep calm, its magical colouring, and its mysterious loveliness.”

SIN AND REPENTANCE.—“Have you considered the infinite difference between *sin* as a particular *act*, and *sin* as a *state* or *habit* of which THE sin is mere sign or effect? And then what can it avail if THE sin should be forgiven, blotted out, annihilated and forgotten, so long as *sin* is the cause, the root, the fountain remains?

MORALITY AND THE BRUTES.—“The brutes are sentient machines, they are governed by unvarying instincts; they perform animal functions which they have in common with man; but they are not capable of actions to which, without any abuse of language, we can ascribe any moral quality. Does a clock deserve credit for *veracity* when it shows the exact time of day? Is the bee doing *right* when it extracts honey from the flower? Is the cat doing *wrong* when it plays with its mouse?”

BRISTOL CONGREGATIONAL INSTITUTE.

T. BROUGHTON KNIGHT.

## Gleanings of the Vintage.

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“As the gleaning of grapes when the vintage is done.”—*Isaiah* xxiv. 13.

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**CATHOLICITY OF CHRIST'S TEACHING.**—All Christ's teaching was *Catholic*, all-embracing. He believed in man, the Pharisees did not. The Lord took His stand, not on a man's notions of things, not even on a man's piety, but on the broad ground of humanity, as glorified in His Incarnation. The Pharisees would have accepted Him as a second Abraham, but He came as a second Adam.”—*Canon Shuttleworth*.

**EVOLUTION AND REVELATION.**—“The original creation of the world by God, as against any theory of emanation, was a matter of faith. The existence of the soul—*i.e.*, the conscious relation of man with God—lay at the root of all religion. If they could be convinced that evolution was not opposed to faith, it was surely wonderfully attractive in itself, and especially in this age. ‘By faith we believe that the worlds were framed by the Word of God.’ So much He had revealed to us. But how He wrought, and the plan on which He wrought, this He had left to be discovered from the work itself.”—*Rev. Aubrey Moore*.

**MORAL THIRST.**—“‘As the hart panteth after the water-brooks,’ so panteth humanity after an ever-receding consolation. The earth is the scene of numerous ruins; cisterns which, being built with costly labours, can hold no water. Samaritan seekers are coming all the way to Jacob's well, because it is Jacob's, thus clinging, through all beggarly pollution, to a fancied righteousness.”—*Rev. R. H. Roberts, B.A.*

**THE INTELLECT AND CHRISTIANITY.**—“At the opening of the century stands Leibnitz, at its middle Butler, at its close Kant, and were there three mightier names in it, any names so full of living and quickening spirit? Christianity has, then, a sort of hereditary claim on the foremost intellects, owes to them gratitude, feels for them love. They have served her, helped her to serve man, been the chosen vehicles of her profoundest and most plastic influences. And living intellect needs the religion; it is full of disquiet, of yearnings after the Infinite it derides.”—*Dr. Fairbairn*.

**PSALMODY AND DEVOTION.**—“A good hymn was the product of the purest and brightest moments of some saintly life, and next in spiritual vitality and power to supernatural inspiration. A psalm was diary and hymn in one. A psalm or hymn crystallised and fixed a supreme experience in a godly life for the succour and consolation of all after ages. A hymn, like coal, was stored sunbeams. Devotional feeling evoked the treasured flame.”—*Rev. H. Batchelor*.

## Reviews.

BY DR. DAVID THOMAS.

CHRISTIAN CHARITY IN THE ANCIENT CHURCH. By G. UHLHORN, D.D.  
Edinburgh : T. and T. Clark, 38, George Street.

This is a work of intrinsic worth and world-wide interest. "*Love as a feeling* pulsates, in some form or other, in all souls, as a *theme* engages more or less the attention of all minds, as a *force* it is the spring and sovereign of the universe, it is the substratum of all moral virtues, it is the fountain of all happiness. It is the sum total of all moral obligation ; love is the fulfilling of the law." The learned author of this volume treats of it in three parts. The first title, "The Old and the New," under which he discusses four subjects, A World without Love, Under the Law, The Manifestation of Love in Christ Jesus, Commencement and Foundations in the Apostolic Age. The second part, "Age of Conflict," under which he discusses Poverty and Distress, First Love, The Means for the Relief of the Poor, Officials and Offices for Charity, The Work and its Results, Observations. The third part, "After the Victory," under which A Perishing World, Congregational Relief of the Poor, Alms, Hospitals, Monasteries, The Church the Refuge of all the Oppressed and Suffering. Thus a wide field is opened for the discussion of this subject. The field teams with historic facts of startling and suggestive interest. It would be well for those who are never tired of denouncing the Church of Rome especially in the first centuries, and who are loudly pealing forth the praises of modern Protestant Churches for their benevolence to study the pages of this volume. Here they will find the old Church "earnestly and systematically engaged in helping those who are oppressed by debt, enthralled by slavery, crushed by poverty, and writhing under the tortures of a heartless usury. We find Chrysostom writing of how they ill use the poor farmers, and they treat them more inhumanely than the barbarians do ! They do not hesitate to impose insupportable burdens daily heavier upon those who are perishing with hunger, who are toiling away their lives. Whether the land yields anything or nothing they always demand the same. In them the Church took an interest." We find Hedeldret, in a letter, saying, "Have pity on the labourers who have laboured in the fields, and who have gained but little, let the harvest be a gain to those of a plentiful and practical harvest." We find Pope Gregory the Great exhorting his sub-Deacon, in a letter, saying, "Have less in view in thy department, as our Vicar, the temporal profit of the Church, than the

alleviation of the miseries of the poor, and, on the contrary, to protect them against whatever oppression may be inflicted on them." Again, he says, "I desire, that the noble and respectable may honour thee for thy humility, and not loathe thee for thy pride. But if thou shouldest see them commit an injustice against the poor, then quickly raise thyself up from thy humility, so that thou mayest be submissive to them as long as they act justly, but their opponent as soon as they do evil." "It is the highest act of liberality," says Ambrose, in his work on duties, "to ransom prisoners, to withdraw them from the hands of their enemies, to rescue men from death, and women from shame, to restore parents to their children, and citizens to their native land." No one will accuse *The Homilist* either with sympathizing with all the tenets, ceremonies, or policy of the Roman Catholic Church, but for its practical benevolence we have a hearty regard.

Modern Protestantism seems too much absorbed with the idea in multiplying Churches, circulating Bibles, sending out Missionaries, pulpit harangues, and sensational addresses, and too much ignoring the fact that true religion is something distinct from all this. It is practical benevolence. "Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?" And again, "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." The church that exemplifies the most practical benevolence is the most religious and Christlike. I care not whether it calls itself Catholic or Protestant, Jewish or Christian. There are men who give their thousands to support some miserable little isms, and who will have their neighbours die of starvation.

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HOME AND FAMILY LIFE. By ROBERT WRIGHT, D.D. Edinburgh and London: W. Blackwood and Sons.

"The thought of home," says the author, "and the recollections of home life, have probably been the means of checking more vice and animating more virtue among men than almost any other ordinary cause that could well be named. When resisting the efforts of cruel and unprincipled tyrants in trying to rivet the chains of slavery upon a people, how often has the remembrance of country and home, and of all the dear ones who were there, fired the bosom and nerved the arm to deeds of most heroic valour! When worn out with the cares, and distracted with the disappointments and duplicity of the world, in public life, how frequently

have the quiet repose, and seasonable rest of a happy family circle refreshed and revived the heart for perseverance in well-doing, when it was beginning to droop and to give way. And who does not know how many a reckless and abandoned life of sin has been completely checked and changed by the thought of a mother's saintly prayers, and the recollection of all the tender assiduities of parental affection in early life suddenly starting up in the mind, and compelling the unhappy wanderer to 'Arise and go to his Father?'"

The work consists of thirteen short services for the use of families and households at home on Sabbath evenings. The subjects are :—"Necessity for a strictly religious education—The triumph and reward of faith—Christ's legacy of peace—The tempter baffled—The Christian in a hostile and unsympathising world—Christ's words of comfort to the bereaved and sorrowing—Christ the Vine, His people the branches—Christ saves to the uttermost—Grace saving the whole man and the whole world—Earnests here of our inheritance hereafter—The call, the promise, and the condition of the Gospel—With Christ in Heaven—Preparation for a common Sabbath." Each address is followed by a short prayer, breathing the spirit of reverence, catholicity, and deep devotion. We heartily recommend this work to our readers.

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A GUIDE TO DEGREES IN ARTS, SCIENCE, LITERATURE, LAW, MUSIC, AND DIVINITY. By EDWIN NORTON. London: L. Upcott Gill, 170, Strand.

This is a work that supplies a deeply felt need. It is a guide to graduation in all faculties, except that of medicine, both at home and abroad, and also to the acquisition of learned distinctions other than degrees proper. It gives direction in arts, sciences, &c., (1) in the English Universities, Oxford, Cambridge, London, Durham, with the College of Physical Science, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Owen's, and Victoria; also with (2) the Irish Universities; Dublin University, the Royal University, the Catholic University, Cork, Galloway, Belfast, &c. (3) The Scottish Universities, Edinburgh, Glasgow, St. Andrew's, Aberdeen. (4) The Canadian Universities and Colleges, the Mc. Gill College and University, Montreal; Laval University; University of Toronto; University College, Toronto; Trinity College, Toronto; Queen's University and College, Kingston; Victoria University; Cabourg; University of New Brunswick; King's College; Windsor (Nova Scotia); School of Practical Science, Ontario. (5) The Australian Universities and Colleges, that of Sydney; St. Paul's

College; St. John's College; St. Andrew's College; University of Melbourne; University of New Zealand. (6) Continental Universities, France, Austria, Hungary, Germany, Italy, Russia, Spain, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Finland, Turkey. (7) The United States Universities. These last are very numerous. The author of this most valuable book says that owing to the great number of Universities, he has to make a selection, and the selection deals very extensively. He has felt the necessity of supplying full information regarding our home Universities for the benefit of students of all nationalities, and also the advantage of giving such particulars concerning the chief Colonial and United States Universities as might be useful to intending emigrants. He has also had regard to the Continent of Europe, with a view to the requirements of Englishmen, Colonists, and Americans seeking degrees from Universities possessing the merits of standing and cheapness: the German Universities being the least expensive. Young men and young women aspiring to University culture and distinctions, could not possibly do better than procure and consult this volume.

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THE PULPIT COMMENTARY. Edited by Canon H. D. M. SPENCE, and by JOSEPH S. EXELL, M.A. JEREMIAH. London: Kegan Paul.

Our readers are acquainted with the plan of this noble work—a work which, when finished will be a standing monument of the Biblical learning, industry, and homiletic skill of the age. The exposition here of the prophet Jeremiah seems all that can be desired, and the introduction to the book is admirable. It is only what a first-class scholar, independent thinker, possessing high literary aptitudes could produce. The Homiletics by the Rev. W. T. Adeney, M.A., are exceptionally good. He has the faculty for seizing the leading truth of a passage and for laying it out in such a way as cannot fail to render his sketches of great worth to preachers of the Gospel. He seems entirely unbiased by theological theories, or schools, and treats the Scriptures as every man should treat them as a code rather than a creed, as regulative rather than speculative. The homilies, by various authors, vary not a little both in merit and style; indeed, we are not sure whether the admission of some of these contributions in a book where the exposition and the homiletics are in the hands of such competent men as Revs. Cheyne and Adeney add much to the value of the work. It is certain that they increase the bulk and therefore the expense of the work, but not in every case do they throw new light or fresh suggestive force.

MAN'S GREAT DEBT. By BARTON DELL. London: Elliot Stock, Paternoster Row.

This is a small volume, but abounding with thought, original, vigorous, and searching. The grand subject it deals with is that which theology has called the *atonement*, and which it has thoroughly misunderstood—a doctrine which in some of its forms—forms in which the popular preacher often puts it, are not only repugnant to reason, but to the teachings of Christ as well. As we should like every reader of *The Homilist* thoughtfully to peruse these pages, we will quote the leading points of the eighteen chapters of which it is composed:—Chapter I.—The Wise King—Man and the Lower Animals—The Thoughtful Traveller and his Fellow Travellers—Their Challenge—His Challenge—Their Difficulty—The Rich Man and his Household—Faith—Certainty—Knowledge of God—Bibles—God as a Father—Man made to be Happy—Early Ages—God reveals Himself to One Tribe of Men—Becomes its King—Governs by Viceroy—Their Duties—Moses—His Laws. Chapter II.—Obedience—God's One Requirement—The Hebrew Multitude Encamp in the Wilderness—Arrival at Sinai—Moses as a Mediator, or Go-between, succeeded by Joshua—Then Judges, Prophets, Seers, Kings—End of Theocracy—Foreign Invasion—Continued Rebellion—God's Long Forbearance—Persecution of His Servants—The Wicked Husbandmen—The Messiah. Chapter III.—Bethlehem and the Shepherds—The Babe in the Manger—The Promised King—Strange Incident in Genesis—King of Salem—The Prince of Peace—His Mysterious Personality—His Lot among Men—His Mission—He Claimed a Divine Origin. Chapter IV.—Signs and Wonders—Were Common—The Wonder Worker—His Wonderful Works—Their Miraculous Characters—Undeniable—The Man Born Blind—Suspected Imposture—His Case Investigated Proved Genuine—The Superhuman in the Son of Man. Chapter V.—Jesus of Nazareth—His Personality—His Human Character—His Denunciation of Wicked Rulers—They determine to Destroy Him—Father and Son—Men Endued with Supernatural Power—Dormant Faculties—Man's Material Body—He Governs It—Mind and Matter—The Son of Man Forgives Sin—His Authority. Chapter VI.—The King of the Jews—Why Did He Come?—His Message to His Own People—They Reject It—The Good Shepherd—Had Other Sheep—The Marriage Dinner—Sacrifice, Its True Nature—The Sacrifice of Christ—The Life Boat—Abraham and Isaac—The Widow's Two Mites—Costly Offerings—How to Value Them—The Family at Bethlehem—Jesus Wept—Wept Over Jerusalem. Chapter VII.—The Messiah, His Life and Sufferings—The "Man of Sorrows"—

"He was Bruised for Our Iniquities."—His Innumerable Followers—Martyrs—The Saving of a Life—A Debt Created—Paul and Philemon—"Bought with a Price"—Divergent Interpretations—The Hiring House—The Purchased Slave. Chapter VIII.—Free Sacrifice—Thank-Offerings—Heathen Sacrifices—Their Probable Origin—The Mosaic Sacrifices, their Character—The Chosen People—Their Inveterate Tendency to Idolatry—The Golden Calf—The Judges, their Shortlived Influence—The Lord's People persist in Rebellion—Their Extinction as a Nation—Their Legacy in the World. Chapter IX.—Right and Wrong—Sin—The Dormant Faculty—The Liberated Hebrews—Their Responsibility—Outward Observances—Had no Cleansing Virtue—Divine Teaching Thereon—One only Path to Forgiveness—The Levitical Law—Its Expiatory Provisions—They Take no account of Sin against God—Expiation and Compensation. Chapter X.—Substitution, its Nature and Operation—A Lawgiver may Suspend or Alter his Laws—Pure Clemency—Man takes account of Crimes, not Sins—He may Mitigate or Remit Punishment, but cannot Pardon—The Great Judge Pardons—The Sinner is Restored—Self-inflicted Punishment—Sacrifices Diverse in Character. Chapter XI.—The Law of Moses—Its Sacrifices—Their Beneficent Provisions—The Animals Specified—The Passover—Blood, its Value as a Sign—Devoid of Efficacy—Blood otherwise represents "Life"—Examples—Epistle to the Hebrews; its Theology—Apostolic Fallibility—Divine Teaching devoid of System. Chapter XII.—Religion and Theology Distinct—Natural Science—System Indispensable—Why not in Religion? No Parallel—The Ploughboy—Essential Knowledge—Paul as a Reasoner—Paul not as a Reasoner—The Writer to the "Hebrews"—His enlightened Ideas—His Theory respecting Blood—Appeal to the Mosaic Authority. Chapter XIII.—Further Appeal to the Mosaic Ritual—Remarkable Examples—The Apostles, their natural bias towards the Law.—Little observable in their Teaching—But they and their Converts retained their Judaism—Frequent mention of the Law—Its Twofold Character—Examples. Chapter XIV.—"Atonement" as Taught in the Sacrifices—What Christ Taught and did not Teach—Eating His Flesh—The Living Bread—The True Vine—Theories of Atonement, none referred to by Christ—His Blood—His Followers were to Drink it—Not enjoined to construct Theories about it—It was to be their Life—God Talking with Man—Employs Man's Language. Chapter XV.—Justice, its Nature and Province—Injustice—The word "Just," in Scripture—Justice confounded with Relentlessness—Where Mercy is right Justice yields—Mercy rejoiceth against Judgment—Compassion—Mercy and the Lower Animals. Chapter XVI.—Man's "Great Debt," a Figure—Debts, their Various

Character—Jacob and Esau—Paying to secure Benefits, or to avert Evils—Finds support in the Ceremonial Law—But there is one only availing Sacrifice—Scientific Theology—Its Foundation—Expiation—"Degrees" Inadmissible. Chapter XVII.—"The Wrath to Come"—Hymn Books—The Paralytic Man—Pardon of Sin—Healing of Disease—The Teaching of Christ on Forgiveness—The Prodigal Son—The Debtor who Owed Ten Thousand Talents—He was freely forgiven—The Kingdom of Heaven and Frank Forgiveness. Chapter XVIII.—"The Plan of Salvation"—Transgressors—Modes of Treatment—Judgment without Mercy—Irrevocable Sentence—Escape by a Substitute—Law Satisfied—The Culpit—His Penitence—The Inexorable Judge—Was not the Lawmaker—Appeal to the King—Enlightened Government—A Just Sentence—Legislator's power to Cancel. Conclusion.—"Fruits meet for Repentance"—Temptations—Warfare—Watching and Striving—"New Man"—New Affections, Desires, and Motives.

If the reader will not be able from these points to follow the line conducted to the grand conclusion, he will discover a variety of subject to show the utter freedom from all dullness. The following extract from F. Myer's "Catholic Thoughts" will, I have no doubt, interest our readers:—"Let it be constantly borne in mind that Religion and Theology are widely different from each other; and that it is most injurious to the one to identify its interests with those of the other. The foundation of the one lies in the moral portion of our nature, that of the other in the intellectual." Religion is a spirit, Theology only a creed. Religion is nourished on ideas and intuitions—the offspring of the reason and the conscience—and the gift of special revelation. Theology is, for the most part, constituted of deductions made by the understanding from its conceptions of these ideas. But such conceptions and deductions are, in many cases, demonstrably false, and in all probability imperfect." The fact is that a large portion of every Theology hitherto promulgated has involved in it a dependence on most complicated and often mutually repellent principles of philosophy. "Revelation is not committed to any theory, nor Religion to any Theology. The Bible is essentially independent of systems of philosophy; neither assuming to constitute a system of its own, nor submitting to be defined by any system of man. The Bible is an inculcation of duties, more than it is a demonstration of propositions; and a declaration of spiritual obligations, rather than of intellectual credenda."

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POVERTY, TAXATION, AND THE REMEDY. By THOMAS BIGGS. London : W. Reeves, 185, Fleet Street.

For many reasons this book is one of the best of modern productions. It is evidently inspired, not by an instinct for gain, but by undoubted patriotism and philanthropy. It is not written in the interest of any political party, or of any pet theory. It is written in the interests of the commonwealth. In one of our daily journals there have lately appeared articles concerning the wretched condition of our poor and starving populations. It has been said that there are millions in this country of ours—where wealth abounds and the rich revel in luxuries—who have lost all hope of improvement, and sunk into that apathy of despair where the active faculties are dormant. A more terrible state of a people than this we can scarcely imagine. It cannot continue, it is like that dull, breezeless atmosphere in nature which heralds storms that will spread devastation over sea and land ; or like the crouching lion that is about to spring on its victim. Unless those who are at the head of affairs will do something to roll off the pressing burden, and to breathe hope into these desponding millions, revolutionary events will occur which are fearful to contemplate. Woe, then, to the men who through filthy lucre, or ambition, have undertaken to guide the vessel of the nation, who, either from ignorance or stupidity, disregard those eternal laws of justice between man and man, which, when contravened, are as inexorable and crushing as the material laws of nature. And woe, too, to the men who apply to their own personal gratifications incomes from £10,000 even to £200,000 a year. “Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for the misery that shall come upon you.”

The Author of this little book, like Stuart Mill, Herbert Spencer, and other intelligent philanthropic politicians, writes, if possible, to avert this terrible impending doom. Because of this, they win that hearing and that confidence amongst the poorer and the working classes which the churches have all but lost. Never more will the churches get power in England until, instead of preaching their miserable creeds, and perpetually pleading for their little denominational institutions, they get inflamed with the ethical spirit of that wonderful Sermon on the Mount. Every man who professes to be a disciple of Christ should labour above all things to relieve the burdens of the people, and let the oppressed go free. Instead of holding Congresses to spread the tenets of their sects, they should become Christly enough to hold Congresses to consider the best methods to restore the rights and remove the woes of the down-trodden and starving poor. We should like to see such a man as the author of this book in Parliament. He would act like another Joseph

Hume, who lifted up his protest against the nil-brained and nil-hearted Parliamenteers who vote away the produce of the people's labour—the only real property—to support armies, and navies, and lazy pensioners who consume the produce of the land.

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THE TEMPTATION OF CHRIST. By GEORGE S. BARRETT, B.A. Edinburgh : Wallace and Macniven.

This volume consists of ten discourses on the Temptation of Christ, the subjects of which are,—The Possibility and Necessity of the Temptation,—The Reality of the Temptation—The Instrument and the Divine Ordering of the Temptation—The Time and Place of the Temptation—The First Temptation—The Second Temptation—The Third Temptation—The Life of Temptation—The Ministry of Angels—Christ's Victory—The Pledge and Power of our Victory over Temptation and Sin. He who looks for striking originality and profound philosophy in this volume of Sermons will look in vain. Mr. Barrett, we understand, is a popular preacher; and a popular preacher, though he may have the capacity for profound thinking, has seldom the time or disposition for such exercise. The more deeply the preacher thinks, the further away he goes from his ordinary audience. If a man is to attract the *oi polloi* he must not be a Bushnell, a Foster, or a Robertson. Albeit this book before us is far superior to ordinary pulpit productions. Its spirit is fresh, free, and catholic, and the style clear and vigorous. Our estimate of it, on the whole, is higher than the estimate which the author has modestly expressed in his preface. The views here propounded are in the main identical with those set forth in *The Genius of the Gospel*, on the same extraordinary event. But we regret to find such expressions as these,—“The conditions necessary for the soul to be so filled with God as to make sin impossible will never be perfectly realised on earth.” Can sin in a creature ever become impossible? Is it impossible for the most perfect finite intelligence in the universe, the oldest and most morally advanced of the archangels, to break away from the orbit of moral purity, and plunge, like those who kept not their first estate, into the realms of the rebellious and corrupt? The supposition involves a denial of moral agency which is attested by universal consciousness. A creature that could not sin is an engine, not an agent, and can never, for his highest deed, obtain the approbation of his own conscience, or the approbation of enlightened consciences of others, or even of God Himself.



## *Leading Homily.*

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### SIMON THE CYRENIAN.

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“AND THEY COMPEL ONE SIMON A CYRENIAN, WHO PASSED BY, COMING OUT OF THE COUNTRY, THE FATHER OF ALEXANDER AND RUFUS, TO BEAR HIS CROSS.”—*Mark* xv. 21.

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HIS must have been a somewhat startling experience, and by no means a pleasant one either, for Simon the Cyrenian.

Here was a man “coming out of the country,” intent, no doubt, on some small business or purchase in the city, and suddenly he is pounced upon and forced to carry the cross of Jesus Christ.

It would seem that Simon must have met the tragic procession somewhere near the city gates, and it would also seem that Jesus had given such signs of feebleness and exhaustion as to make some help absolutely necessary in bearing the burden of His cross.<sup>1</sup>

But the question at once presents itself, by what right, from what cause, did they seize on this stray traveller and force him

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<sup>1</sup> Of the two hypotheses, that either (1) the pieces of the cross were not connected until after arrival at the place of crucifixion, and, therefore, Christ may have borne the transverse, while Simon followed with the upright part; or, (2) the cross being already united, Christ took the head, and, therefore, the heavier, while Simon followed with the other; the latter is preferred. Compare John xix. 17. with Luke xxiii. 26. See further on.

into the degrading position of bearing this shameful cross? For let it be remembered that then it was *a shameful cross*. What is now our ornament and pride, the symbol of all that is worthiest in man and divinest in God, was then the badge of shame and lowest degradation. So that it was an outrage and insult of the very last degree, which was inflicted on Simon the Cyrenian, when they compelled him to bear the cross of Jesus Christ. The vilest of that howling Jewish mob would have shrunk from touching it, it would have been pollution, while the lowest Roman soldier would have regarded "bearing a cross" as an unspeakable degradation.

Then how came they, how dared they inflict this insult on Simon the Cyrenian? Was it, think you, the swarthy hue, the dusky complexion, the slave mark on skin or dress, which singled him out as one who might be safely wronged? This seems to be the most probable opinion,<sup>2</sup> endorsed by at least one very great critical authority, for Simon *was* a Cyrenian, that is, a native of Northern Africa, and though we may not, perhaps, say positively he was a "man of colour," yet there might be, and as I venture to believe there was, enough to mark him out *the slave*. And it was for that reason they dared inflict on him this wanton insult, and compelled him to bear the cross of the doomed Nazarene. But, friends, if that be so, then my text becomes filled with very sacred instruction and encouragement, and touches into very gracious light some of the darker sides of experience and of life; for—

1. Note here that the sorrowful mark was also the Divine mark, separating out this man from a vast multitude for this special service to the suffering Christ. What story of disaster, suffering, and wrong lay behind that African cross-bearer we do not know, but the very fact that he was, and could be, singled out from all that multitude for such a duty, points very strongly in the direction of the other fact that there was something in his appearance and his dress which marked him off from both Jew and Roman as a stranger and, perhaps, a slave. But then, does

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<sup>2</sup> Meyer, with whom Alford apparently agrees. Note on Matthew xxvii. 32.

not *that* open a door for very lovely and consoling thought concerning what we call the strange, dark providences of God? For we might ask, what was God doing when that slave child was born, when the dark colour gathered in the tiny face, when the mean dress of servitude was first put on, when the lash first fell upon his quivering flesh, when, tossed from hand to hand, a mere human chattel, Simon the Cyrenian appeared on the fringe of the crowd pressing out that day from the gate of Jerusalem? To human judgment no lot could be more hopeless or more sad; for such a man might seem both God-forsaken and God-forgotten, a mere waif and stray swept up amidst the outcasts and off-scourings of a world.

But it was not so, for through all that hard, bitter experience God was putting the mark, His mark, upon the man, by which he should one day be selected from an enormous crowd to be Christ's helper in an hour of sorest need. It was the hand of a dark providence working through sorrowful years to bring the slave and the Saviour beneath the same burden and blessing of the cross. And may not the same be true in our own experience of life? The very thing which stamps our lives with a peculiar sadness, which flings a dark cloud over our fortune and career, which puts a mark on us, hopeless and indelible as the branding-iron placed upon the body of the slave, has sometimes proved to be a sacred preparation for special and beautiful service, which none else could render so wisely and so well. Who are the cross-bearers of the world, the true companions of Christ in His great enterprise of love? *Not* those who have been lapped in luxurious ease, on whom the world smiles, and whom the multitude surrounds with shouts of praise. But rather those who have been bruised by a heavy hand, who have "learned by experience" the bitterness of suffering and wrong. They can take hold, as no others can, of one end of the cross of Jesus Christ. It is the mother, who has closed the eyes and folded the dead hands of one of her own children, who can best console that other woman mourning for the same loss, and can best direct the sister-mourner to the consolations of her God. It is the man, who has both felt and forgiven sin against himself,

that can best preach to others the Gospel of Divine forgiveness. It is the reformer, who has been struck and stung in his own person by some aged wrong, that stretches out the strongest hand to lift like burdens from other lives; for the very thing which thus sets one apart, also marks him out for the special service, just as the slave was singled out among the crowd, as by the finger of God, to be the cross-bearer of Jesus Christ.

And if these things be so, then, let us not slight our own care, or murmur at our own burden. And depend upon it, there is something in this world to be done for Jesus Christ which only we can do. Christ is somewhere waiting for our help, and if we will only learn our lesson, follow the guidance of God's providence, evade no present duty, then one day, when we are "coming out of the country" toward the gates of the holy city of holy service, we shall find the cross, and the Saviour, waiting for us in the way. And the faithless thought, that anyone can be too weak, too poor, too insignificant, stands rebuked for ever by that sight of the slave and the Saviour bearing together the burden of the cross.

2. And here a second truth is presented for our consideration. It is suggested by the words, "*they compelled him,*" or, "him they compelled" to bear Christ's cross. It was no willing choice. Indeed a self-chosen cross is very seldom the right one for us to carry. And it is just here we touch the true reason of so much religious failure. We *make* our own crosses instead of simply carrying Christ's; we strive to do religious work instead of doing our own work religiously. Yet is it not clear that if Simon had cut down all the trees in Gethsemane, and all the cedars of Lebanon, he would but have made for himself a heavier burden, and would have been no true helper of Jesus Christ. And just so, I believe, there are whole heaps of so-called religious work being done in these days, vast expenses are being incurred, grievous burdens are being borne, that are doing simply nothing to promote the cause of Jesus Christ; and for this one reason, that they are too frequently crosses chosen for self-glory, and fashioned by self-will. Often we go staring about for something to do, when our real duty is lying *there*, in our own home, or in

our own church, waiting to be done. But it is that, and that alone, which really tells; not the fashioning a crucifix after our own pleasure, studded with jewels, glittering with gold, that can be held up, flashing in the sun, for all the world to see; but taking up the homely cross of a hard day's work, or a humble duty, simply because God has put it in our way.

But the special point to which, just here, I would direct your attention is this:—*Does anyone take up life after this fashion without some pressure, some compulsion?* Surely not. There is much true fellowship with Christ, even some true discipleship, but very seldom “a communion of the blood,” without compulsion.

“Him they compelled,” as when harsh and untoward circumstances force a young man away from his cherished plans of life, and oblige him, for the sake of those he loves, to give his heart and energy to a business or profession for which he has no taste. Men so placed often fail, because they will not see God behind the disappointment, and so they rebel, or else slouch through life with sullen indifference. But where they are of a different strain, and take what must be as God's best for them, when they lay hold of this cross with reverent and submissive hands, then what grand men they often make. In their moral conquest there are all the beginnings of spiritual greatness, and that man's best self is brought out because “him” these unfriendly circumstances “compelled to bear the cross.” “Him they compelled.” Do you see that young Jewish Rabbi flashing along the Damascus road, hating the very name of Christ, and loathing the story of His cross? His life is all laid out, his position is secure, his renown is safe among the generations of Israel. But there came one blinding flash, one awful, crushing revelation that swept away the purpose and the dream of Saul for ever, and Paul arose the bondsman of Jesus Christ, chained for ever to the cross he once despised. Henceforth he lives a life “constrained,” “compelled,” but it was glorious living, and the mighty influence of that man, *compelled* to bear the cross of Christ, will last longer than the world.

And so, my friends, let me say this, to some of you especially, your life is not going to take the shape and fashion that you

wished ; there is a cross in it that you will be compelled to bear ; you will have to *be* something different from your boyish dreams, and *do* something that you never meant to do. But do not let your lives be spoiled because of that. Do not sulk and do not whine. Try to see God behind the compulsion and the disappointment. Behold the crown shining above the cross. Believe this, that you will be helping goodness and helping God more by cheerily making the best of what God gives, than of *being made* by what you wish.

“Him they compelled to bear Christ’s cross,” and Simon would have been dead and clean forgotten but for being forced to do that very thing.

3. And now this leads us to another thought suggested by “*the manner* of this cross-bearing.” It seems from Luke’s account,<sup>3</sup> that they did not entirely remove the cross from the shoulders of our Lord, but so arranged its parts that Simon might “bear it after Jesus.” And it is extremely possible that they placed the head of the cross on Christ’s shoulder, while the foot rested on that of Simon. So that when the eye of the man travelled along the cross, it rested on the form of the suffering Son of God. The burden was thus borne between the two.<sup>4</sup> And that is the only bearable way for any man to bear the burden of the cross. Life would be very dark, and the burden of life too heavy to be borne were there no glimpse or gleam of God and His incarnate purpose at the end. The old Stoics used to say that no one had a right to complain of life, because there was always an open door by which a man could leave it when he chose ; that is, he could always end his trouble by committing suicide. But we Christians have a better thing to say, for we can point you to the Divine purpose and the Divine love. The cross, thy cross, my brother, is borne after Jesus. The darkest path has been fore-trodden by His blessed feet, the gloomiest way is lighted by His love. The *via dolorosa* led straight to

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3 It is conceivable that Simon carried the whole, but, all things considered, very improbable.

4 If this hypothesis be correct, then the heaviest end still rested on the shoulders of the Christ.

Heaven, the cross was the blood-red step to the glory of His throne. And so we dare believe that if in any true sense we are going "after Jesus," there must be a sublime purpose underlying all this strange, tangled, oft-times sad experience of life. The cross is a bitter burden until we learn that thereby we are joined to the "beloved Son in whom God is well pleased."

In conclusion, let us mark two things. (1) Behold one of life's divinest transfigurations. When they placed the end of the cross upon the shoulders of the slave, they meant to put fresh dishonour on the Christ. But the cross has grown to be the supreme uplifting power of all those of whom that slave was the representative and type. Not only has it rescued the name of Simon the Cyrenian from oblivion, but it has done far more, for it has broken the fetters of the slave well-nigh throughout the world. When these men made the slave the helper of the Saviour, they unconsciously proclaimed "liberty to the captive," and slowly through the ages the power of the cross has been eating away the iron chains, and it cannot be very long before slavery shall become altogether a thing of the darkness and the past. (2) Note these results, the father carried the cross, the sons were known afterwards as devoted servants of Jesus Christ.<sup>5</sup> Simon the Cyrenian was "the father of Alexander and Rufus," as S. Mark tells us. "Greet Rufus," writes S. Paul, in his epistle to the Romans, "Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine." So that it would seem that through the father's cross-bearing, the whole family were brought to Christ. The precise steps by which they came of course we do not know, but we do know this, that even now, where a husband and a father will "bear the cross" and "bear it after Jesus," in other words, will be a Christian and confess Christ, there is a mighty influence exerted upon the whole family, which only a sad misfortune, or a worse mistake, can prevent from leading to the grand result of the children following their father's Saviour, and worshipping their father's God.

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<sup>5</sup> Mark mentions them as well-known disciples, and there is at least nothing impossible in the identification of the persons mentioned by St. Paul, with members of this family.

These, then, are some of the lessons to be gathered from this experience of Simon the Cyrenian :—(1) *The sorrowfullest mark may yet be God's mark, separating us for special service to Jesus Christ.* (2) *Compulsion to disagreeable duty may still be God's way of opening the door to everlasting honour.* (3) *Cross-bearing is true and blessed only when shared with Christ, and the result of such a sorrow may be the salvation of one's own family, and leave wide blessing to the world.* Moreover, this is the Christian's broad, hopeful view of life, especially its darker side. Yes, friends, we—

“ Fain would see  
A mercy still in everything ;  
And shining through all mysteries.”

Let us teach it, trust it, give our offering to its honour, and yield our spirits to its grace.

BURNT ASH, LONDON.

GEORGE CRITCHLEY, M.A.

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AN ANGRY TREE.—A singular species of acacia is growing at Virginia, Nevada, which shows all the characteristics of a sensitive plant. It is about eight feet high, and growing rapidly. When the sun sets, its leaves fold together and the ends of the twigs coil up like a pig-tail, and if the latter are handled, there is evident uneasiness throughout the plant. Its highest state of agitation was reached when the tree was removed from the pot in which it was matured into a larger one. To use the gardener's expression, it went very mad. It had scarcely been placed in its new quarters before the leaves began to stand up in all directions, like the hair on the tail of an angry cat, and soon the whole plant was in a quiver. At the same time it gave out a most sickening and pungent odour, resembling that of rattlesnakes when teased. The smell so filled the house that it was necessary to open the doors and windows, and it was a full hour before the plant calmed down and folded its leaves in peace.

## Germ of Thought.

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### A Soul Longing for God.

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“ONE THING HAVE I DESIRED OF THE LORD, AND THAT WILL I SEEK AFTER; THAT I MAY DWELL IN THE HOUSE OF THE LORD ALL THE DAYS OF MY LIFE, TO BEHOLD THE BEAUTY OF THE LORD, AND TO ENQUIRE IN HIS TEMPLE.”—*Psalms* xxvii. 4.

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THE character of this Psalm in its language, ideas, and devotional spirit, is not unlike the twenty-third Psalm. What fervour, what confidence, what longing for God. It matters little when it was written, or what its surrounding circumstances; whether at Absalom's usurpation, or after Jonathan's visit to David in the wood (1 Sam. xxiii. 16). “In style and spirit,” says Dr. Thomas,\* “it is Davidic.” “And,” according to its title—a Psalm of David—“there is no reason for supposing that he was not its author.” If the Psalmist is recording his own experience, he is describing also the experience of many a tried and trusting soul yearning for protection, and closer communion with God.

Away from Jerusalem, fleeing, and in distress, well might the Psalmist long for the services of the Sanctuary. Is not sorrow and trouble, anxiety and care, “the common lot” of all who seek to “live soberly, and righteously, and godly in this present world?” And where is real consolation, availing strength, and true courage to be obtained? We need all these, to face the world and fight the battle of life. Here in our text we have:—

I.—THE SOUL'S RESOLVE. What is life without aim—without purpose? It is a moral waste;—

“It is as tedious as a twice-told tale,  
Vexing the ear of a drowsy man.”

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\* See Dr. Thomas on the Psalms, Vol. III., Editor's Series, p. 16.

The truly earnest and thoughtful soul, will have its "mark," its "prize," its resolve ever before it. Mark the Psalmist's resolve.

1. *It is single.* "One thing have I desired." In a multiplicity of aims men fail. One purpose should be before us. "Ye cannot serve God and mammon."

2.—*It is earnest.* "That will I seek after." The earnest man is the real man. Here is determination. The world's great men have all been in earnest—determined. If we would have success, there must be earnest activity, earnest work. Let us work, then, while it is day, to "make our calling and election sure."

II.—THE SOUL'S DESIRE. "One thing have I *desired*." It was this desire, this yearning of the soul, that prompted the resolve. The felt need roused the soul to action. Oh, to feel our need of God, of Christ. It is well for us when God permits trials to come upon us; when He darkens the night that we may crave for the day, when He lowers us into the depths that we may yearn to soar into the sunlight of joy. The Psalmist's resolve—his earnest desire was—

1. *The enjoyment of the Sanctuary.* "That I may dwell in the house of the Lord." Deprived of the services of the Sanctuary, a wanderer from his home, driven from his beloved Jerusalem, his soul found no rest. Fain would he return like the weary dove to the ark of safety. To him there was pleasure and happiness in the services of the Sanctuary—the public worship of God. Oh, souls depressed, the house of prayer may be to you a "Bethel," or a "burning bush," where you may hear the voice of God, and meet Him face to face; for God still deigns to dwell with men.

2. *That this enjoyment might be life-long.* "All the days of my life." He would be a constant attendant upon those services, wherein his soul found such delight; and his deep desire was that there might be no more interruptions and privations all the days of his life. It was this feeling that brought back the "prodigal son" to his Father's house. It was not for outward forms and "vain repetitions" his soul craved, it was for the near, continued, and loving presence of his heavenly Father.

It is blessed to feel the Divine presence here on earth ; but we “look also for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God ;” Jerusalem above. And “In my Father’s house,” said the blessed Saviour, “are many mansions.” There our fellowship and communion with “the Father of spirits,” will be eternal.

III.—THE SOUL’S PURPOSE. There is a joy in communion with God which is bliss to man to know. Sordid and selfish souls know it not ; they lock the door of their hearts against it. The godly man delights in heavenly enjoyments. His serious resolve, his earnest desire, is that nothing shall intervene between him and his God. But why is this ? What is his soul’s purpose in it all ? Is it merely for gain—for personal gratification ? He loves goodness for goodness’ sake ; he loves God, because God is goodness itself ; and he desires a near assimilation to Him. This is his soul’s purpose, as the true worshipper draws near to God.

1. *To behold the Divine glory.* “To behold the beauty of the Lord.” To gaze upon the glory of the Eternal ; to realize the Divine presence and favour, and to be purified by His purity, is the desire and purpose of his very being. Only the pure in heart shall see God. We must partake of His purity if we would behold His glory. As man gazes he himself is transformed.

2. *To drink at the Divine Fountain.* “To inquire in His Temple.” God is the eternal Fountain of Truth and Goodness, Might and Majesty. His fulness is inexhaustible. What glories He is ever revealing to the pure in heart. Oh, to be changed into the same image from glory to glory ; to know Him whom to know is life eternal.

ENNISKILLEN.

J. W. KAYE.



“He who describes himself to worthy men in a manner contrary to truth is the most sinful wretch in this world ; he is the worst of thieves, a stealer of minds. All things have their sense ascertained by speech ; in speech they have their basis ; and from speech they proceed : consequently a falsifier of speech falsifies everything.”—THE LAWS OF MENU.

## The Incarnation.

### A CHRISTMAS MEDITATION.

“AND THE WORD WAS MADE FLESH, AND DWELT AMONG US, (AND WE BEHELD HIS GLORY, THE GLORY AS OF THE ONLY BEGOTTEN OF THE FATHER,) FULL OF GRACE AND TRUTH.”—*John* i. 14.

THE advent of Christ to our world is encircled with a halo of celestial glory, and fraught with inestimable blessings to the children of men. The apostle John felt its importance so deeply that he began his Gospel by proclaiming it in language transparently clear and transcendently sublime. In statements that link time with eternity, the human with the Divine, he shows that the universal longing of the human heart for an Incarnate God, had been fully met and satisfied. On account of the greatness of God, and the littleness of our faculties, there must of necessity be a zone of mystery about the Incarnation of the Son of God; but our inability to comprehend the fact does not alter it nor prevent us *apprehending* it; we can believe it, and with all the angels of God devoutly worship the new-born King. “The Word,” which, from the beginning, “was with God,” and “was God,” in the fulness of time “became flesh.” *That* was a fact which John and his fellow disciples felt sure about; it was a historic fact which no gainsaying could disprove. Christ had dwelt among men, manifested His glory, proved Himself to be full of grace and truth; thus revealing the favour of God, and proclaiming the law of righteousness. The Incarnation of Christ confirmed the truth of revelation as given by Moses and the prophets; lifted men to sublimer heights where they could view the Father’s house, and get glimpses of the Father’s glory. These words are suggestive of suitable meditation for the Christmas season, when all Christendom celebrates the advent of the Divine Redeemer to our world. Let us notice—

I.—CHRIST’S ASSUMPTION OF THE NATURE OF MAN. “The Word was made flesh.” He took not upon Him the nature of angels, nor a phantom, intangible form, but the vestment of mortality,

by which He was capable of growth, weariness, sickness, sorrow, pain, death. Thus He became (a) *A living man*. He called Himself "the Son of Man," "the Son of David." Strong objections have been raised against this anthropomorphic representation of God; and Matthew Arnold has said we conceive of the Deity "as a non-natural and exaggerated man in the next street." But the statement is absurd, for Christ was a *real man*, only in Him was enshrined "the fulness of the Godhead bodily." He was, therefore, (b) *The God-man*. "The only begotten Son of the Father." There had never been such a man before, nor has there been since. He was unique, and towers in sublime, but solitary grandeur, above all the holiest and best who have ever lived. "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself." He was (c) *God-man living with men*. To exhibit, as the second Adam, a type of original sinless humanity, and to show what fallen man may ultimately become when transformed into the Divine likeness, He dwelt with men as Brother, Friend, Exemplar, Redeemer. He dwelt with men to furnish abundant evidences of who He was, and what His mission was to our world. Christ still dwells with men; His delights have ever been in their society. He now condescends to dwell "*in us*, the hope of glory." The Church—the company of His faithful disciples—is the body in which Christ now resides, and through which He displays His glory to the world. In these respects, Christ is still incarnate and dwells among men; He has not abandoned the world, for His promise is being fulfilled in the experiences of all who really love Him,—“Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.” Let us also notice—

II.—CHRIST'S MANIFESTATION OF THE GLORY OF GOD. John speaks for the rest of the apostles as well as himself. As spectators in a theatre, they had seen the various acts in the drama of their Master's life. They had not invented the Gospel, or conceived Christ as a creature of their imaginations; He was a *reality*, He had dwelt among them. They knew from the evidence of their senses, as well as the experience of their hearts, whom they believed. Not only His humiliation and sufferings had been witnessed by them, but also His glory; and the proofs

of His Messiahship were *sufficient* and *satisfactory*. They saw His glory in the transfiguration scene upon the mount, when they heard the attesting voice from the excellent glory. The brilliancy that met then in a focus, they saw spread over the whole of His beneficent and beautiful life. The glory of His *goodness* was seen in His countless works of mercy; of His *power*, in the miraculous manner in which those works were performed; of His *wisdom*, in the matchless words He uttered; of His *righteousness*, in His freedom from, and hatred of, sin; of His *self-sacrificing love*, in His readiness to lay down His life even for His enemies; of His *Godhead*, in that He rose from the dead, ascended up on high, and dispensed gifts to men. Such glory transcended all that blazes in the orbs of heaven or flashes from the wonders of the world. It was exhibited (a) *In unlimited measure*. There was a freeness in the grace and truth He exhibited that knew no stint, and was undiminished by its most lavish bestowments. Even on the cross He prayed for His murderers, and pardoned the dying thief. He is able to save to the uttermost; saving doth not exhaust Him. (b) *In unequivocal reality*. He was Truth itself, His word was truth. There was no hollowness or hypocrisy in Him, or in anything He said or did. After the test of more than eighteen centuries, He stands before the world unsullied in His grace, unimpeachable in His truth. His grace encourages us to approach Him; His truth assures us that if we come we shall be in no wise cast out.

CONCLUSION.—We have here (1) *A mystery to adore*. “Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh.” A God alone can comprehend a God. Let our faith be all the more deep, and reverent, because of the greatness and surpassing grandeur of the truth to which it clings. (2) *A doctrine to accept*. It is well authenticated, established by *many candid, competent* witnesses. The evidences of Christ’s advent to our earth,—His work,—Messiahship, &c., are abundant and ever augmenting. (3) *A theme to proclaim*. The world never heard such joyful news before, such glad tidings of great joy. They are for all people, and all time. Man, as a *sinful, suffering, dying* creature needs such a Saviour as Jesus of Bethlehem, who

was born in the days of Herod, the King. It is God's glory to save men; the Incarnation showed the love of the everlasting Father, His merciful disposition towards our race, and confirmed all previous declarations respecting the goodwill of Jehovah. Have we admitted the Redeemer into our hearts? Are we doing all we can to make Him known to others? Knowledge of Him will be to us a savour of life unto life, or of death unto death, according as we *accept*, or *reject*, His Gospel.

CLIFTON.

FREDERICK W. BROWN.

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### A Christmas-day Sketch for Children and Parents.

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"FOR UNTO US A CHILD IS BORN."—*Isaiah* ix. 6.

"AND THEY SHALL CALL HIS NAME EMMANUEL, WHICH BEING INTERPRETED IS, GOD WITH US."—*Matthew* i. 23.

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THE central thought and theme of to-day will be a child—the birth of a child. And the most important element in that thought and feeling will be the relation of that birth, and of that Child to us and to the world. It will be quite appropriate, then, as well as seasonable if I address the first part of my discourse to children. "Christmas day," the day on which we celebrate the birth of that Child, should be a specially bright and happy day to children. There is not one present but he has heard something about it already; and but few, if any, but they have received some small gift to commemorate it. I should like, then, to contribute my share to their enjoyment and pleasure by telling them something about the Child whose birthday they will keep. But how shall I do this? If I were a painter I would paint a pretty picture. Well, as we have not got the picture we will do the next best thing we can without it. I will tell you what we have got,—we have got a word-picture

of it, and I am going to ask you to read that, and then we will talk about it and see how far we can reproduce it by a simple description of it. (Read Luke ii. 4-20; take up the several incidents and describe them in detail. Now is not that an interesting, pretty picture?)

Now I have attempted to describe the picture of *the real Christmas day*. I want you to learn something from it. Jesus, you see, was once a child. Yes, that Jesus of whom you read and hear so much—about whom you sing such pretty hymns, was once a little baby boy, then He grew bigger, ran about the house, and asked His father and mother all sorts of questions; grew bigger still, went into His father's workshop, made little sailing boats, &c., went for a walk, played and amused Himself with His little companions and friends. Now, I want you to think of Jesus in this way—as a real, cheerful, living, playful little child and boy, as fond of play as any of you. And I want you to think of Jesus thus, because I do not want you to think that it is wrong or naughty to play, and that with all your heart and strength, at proper times and in proper places; also that if you had lived when Jesus did you might have had Him for a playmate or a companion. Some boys had—you may have Him now;—if you cannot challenge Him to run a race, or to have a game of marbles, you can have Him for your companion and friend as really, actually, as though you could do this: then you see your play will be real play—proper amusement. I do not mean by that, that it will be grave, serious, measured play, without the element of play in it, which would be no play at all, but play without any strife, cheating, grumpiness, and so play that will give you real pleasure, and afford others real happiness. Perhaps you have never thought of Jesus in this way. You have been accustomed to think of Him as a very proper sort of boy—such as you did not much want to be yourself—or as always reading some good book—listening to the good instructions of His mother, &c. My own impression is that Jesus, as a boy, was nothing of the kind. If He were, I must confess that, to me, the childhood, boyhood of Jesus, would lose all its charm. Doubtless, as a boy, He was obedient, pure, good, free from sinful passion

and boyish vulgarity. But I love to think of Him as a bright, cheerful, laughing, playful boy, and so knowing all about the impulses, temptations, vexations, joys, and sorrows of boyhood. I think Jesus was a *pattern boy* as well as a *pattern man*, and that He would not be if He had no play or vivacity of spirit in Him. Think not that playfulness in a boy would be any more derogatory to His dignity, as Son of God, than His planeing a board at the bench, or His sawing a piece of timber, as a young man, in the workshop of Joseph, and we know He did this, for He was not only the son of a carpenter, He was a carpenter Himself. What is natural to us is divine. The merry laugh, the exciting game, the cheerful play of the boy, girl, is natural, and so God's idea of boyhood, girl-life, and I cannot think that the boyhood or boy-life of Jesus was opposed to, or at variance with, that idea. When, then, you sing that pretty hymn "I want to be like Jesus," I want you to wish to be like Jesus in your play, as well as in all your conduct, behaviour to your parents: then your play will be the right kind of play, it will be carried on in a right, proper spirit, and so I want for this Christmas day, when you celebrate His birth, to remind you that Jesus was once a child—a little boy—so that He knows all about your games, and pastimes, and amusements, that as you thus think about Him when you play and amuse yourselves, you may ask Him to help you to be good and kind and happy.

But there are some important, valuable truths which we older ones may also learn from the birth and *name* of this remarkable child, and which we may ponder over with interest and with profit as we celebrate His birthday to-day.

I.—WE MAY REMEMBER THAT GOD CAME TO US IN THAT CHILD. His parents were instructed to call Him "Emmanuel"—"God with us." God came to us in that child then. Such a fact is big with meaning, pregnant with vital, jubilant truth. Why did God come to us thus in a babe? He must have had some wise and loving purpose that He wished to secure thereby. What? For ages men had been taught to fear God, their thoughts of Him filled them with dread, terror, dismay, hence the gods of the heathen nations. The large body of the Jewish nation not much

in the advance of the heathen. This dread of God was universal. To correct all such ideas, and remove all such feelings from the minds and hearts of men *for ever*, God came to us as a child. Are you afraid of a babe? Is there anything in a child to strike fear, to awaken terror? Let us remember then when we celebrate the birth of that child, that we celebrate the fact that God came to us in the most beautiful, attractive, significant form in which He could come, to strike at the very root of the error that was embittering, estranging, the hearts of men from Him, and to attract our hearts, inspire our confidence, and win our love to Him, in the birth of a lovely babe.

II.—THAT GOD CAN COME TO US IN THE SMALLEST THINGS. We generally look for God in the great, vast, grand, mighty, terrible. We expect some imposing display of power, gorgeous display of pomp, something to strike the eye, &c. Will you remember by the feast of to-day that God came to us in that child, that quiet, loving, unpretending babe, that lay in that manger, nestled in His mother's bosom? And so God comes to us in the little, simple, humble, noiseless, common things of life, if we will only look for Him. Especially He comes to us in our children. They bring love with them, and "love is of God," &c. We might in a far higher sense than we think for call every child "Emmanuel." In our child God comes to us, God is with us. If God came to us in Mary's child, why not come to us in our own? Do we believe this? If so, should we not oftener look for and educate the God in them? An error in the training of children. We should do far better with them if from the beginning we sought to bring out, nourish, educate, develop the good, the God that is in them, "to help them to recognise the Divine that is in their hearts and minds, and to express it in a noble form," instead of making it our chief concern to correct the wrong, to restrain the evil. We correct the wrong, restrain the evil, leaving the good to take care of itself; whereas if we cultivated, strengthened the good, it would prevent, overpower the evil. Shall we learn to-day, then, as we celebrate the birthday of our Saviour, to look for God in little things of our every-day life, common things around us, especially in our children, and thus feeling that we

are surrounded by God, we shall feel more than ever that life is a sacred, holy, divine thing?

III.—THAT THE WHOLE OF LIFE IS SACRED, AND SHOULD BE CONSECRATED TO GOD. God came to us in that child. We have, somehow or other, got the idea that a child is a neutral kind of thing, if not actually a child of the evil one, until it reaches what we call the age of accountability; and so we shut our children out of the church, and, I fancy, some would shut them out of Heaven. A voice distinct, loud, and clear comes to us from that manger to-day, while we celebrate the birth of the child that was born there, that the whole of life is sacred, open for the operations, possession, enjoyment of God. God was in that child notwithstanding all its infantile wants, weaknesses, complaints. And so God was in that boy, notwithstanding all His playfulness, vivacity. Indeed that was the boyish, outward manifestation of God; the boyish way of declaring God's glory. If God was in that child, "God manifest in the flesh," His whole life, from His birth to His death, was God-life. His actions, conduct, behaviour as a child-boy must have been the actions, conduct, behaviour of God in human flesh—the boyhood of God. Let the goodness of your children be seen in the natural outcome of their natural life, whatever their age. The child, boy, girl, may be as real a Christian as the man or woman.

IV.—THAT GREAT ENDINGS HAVE LITTLE BEGINNINGS. Who shall measure the magnitude, height, depth, length, breadth of the work which Christ accomplished as Saviour of the world? Human, angelic language cannot describe it, eternity cannot measure it, yet it has all to be traced back to the birth of that child whose anniversary we celebrate to-day. You see God's method is "evolution" from the small to the great. You refuse to do this and that because it is so small and tiny. You want to do some great, grand thing, to shine. Ah! that is not God's way of doing things! That stately oak was once an acorn, the Redeemer of the world was once a babe, the mighty Saviour was once a child. Do what good you can, whether it be small or great, you don't know into what it may grow. Christ's work, as Saviour, commenced at that manger—the salvation of children—

our children. There is an influence emanating from that manger that is active, powerful for the salvation of our little ones. *Christ in the manger is the Saviour of children and men, Christ on the cross is the Saviour of men and children.* We can all join in singing the anthem, "Unto you is born this day a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."

POPLAR.

BENJAMIN PREECE.

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HOME SPUN RELIGION.—"There was nothing overstrained, nothing sensational in anything Jesus did. His four biographies have, of course, an Eastern colouring, but we clearly learn from them that He was not proud and domineering, but meek and lowly—willing to help all, heal all, save all. His whole life, indeed, was a life of earnest, useful, unselfish work, but at the same time it was not devoid of geniality and sociability, of private friendships and home spun virtues. He had His friends, both male and female, whom He loved and by whom He was loved in return. He went to marriage feasts and dinner parties, and had His quiet evenings with Martha and Mary and Lazarus at Bethany. How different this life from the legendary lives of the saints with their asceticism, their ecstasies, and their artificial piety! How different from the mawkish biographies of some modern divines who would appear, from their diaries, to have lived far above the low level of the Ten Commandments. In such a life as His, was there not a manifestation of God? Without accepting the pantheistic idea of Deity as visible everywhere and in all things—that He shines in the ruby, lives in the plant, and awakens into consciousness in man,—we may safely say that in all human goodness there is a manifestation of Divine goodness."—JOHN CUNNINGHAM, D.D.

Homiletical Commentary.

NOTES ON THE EPISTLE OF JAMES.

Justification by Works.

Chapter ii. 20-26.—“BUT WILT THOU KNOW, O VAIN MAN, THAT FAITH WITHOUT WORKS IS DEAD? WAS NOT ABRAHAM OUR FATHER JUSTIFIED BY WORKS, WHEN HE HAD OFFERED ISAAC HIS SON UPON THE ALTAR? SEEST THOU HOW FAITH WROUGHT WITH HIS WORKS, AND BY WORKS WAS FAITH MADE PERFECT? AND THE SCRIPTURE WAS FULFILLED WHICH SAID, ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS IMPUTED UNTO HIM FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS: AND HE WAS CALLED THE FRIEND OF GOD? YE SEE THEN HOW THAT BY WORKS A MAN IS JUSTIFIED, AND NOT BY FAITH ONLY. LIKEWISE ALSO WAS NOT RAHAB THE HARLOT JUSTIFIED BY WORKS, WHEN SHE HAD RECEIVED THE MESSENGERS, AND HAD SENT THEM OUT ANOTHER WAY? FOR AS THE BODY WITHOUT THE SPIRIT IS DEAD, SO FAITH WITHOUT WORKS IS DEAD ALSO.”

THE apostle Paul says, “a man is justified by faith only;” the apostle James says, “a man is justified by works, and not by faith only;” and each of them quotes, in support of his doctrine, the self-same words,—“Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness.” It would be to call in question the intelligence or good faith of these two men (not to speak of their inspiration) to say that they misunderstood or misapplied these words: it follows that they were looking at the subject of them from two different points of view.

Apparent antagonism The doctrine of justification by faith only, and the
real agreement. contradictory doctrine of justification by works and
not by faith only, cannot both be got out of the words quoted; but the doctrine of justification by faith only as

the ground of the sinner's acceptance before God, and the not contradictory doctrine of justification by works and not by faith only as the evidence that the sinner has really been accepted,—that he is what he professes to be: these two aspects of what is substantially one may very easily be found in them, according as the former or latter is uppermost in the speaker's mind. For example, if Paul wishes to illustrate the one way of salvation for guilty sinners, through the merits of a crucified Redeemer, he will quote the words to prove that this way is through faith, believing the promise of God, holding what God says as done; it being self-evident that as a man cannot be justified by the works of the flesh, if he is to be justified at all, it must be by faith alone. If, again, the same apostle be wishing to counteract the tendency he finds in some of the churches to *supplement* justifying faith by the works of the flesh,—if he finds church members thinking they can help to make themselves acceptable to God by works of their own—in this case, again, he will flash upon them the Divine word of a salvation in its very nature incapable of being supplemented, already perfectly wrought out, and as perfectly wrought out to be received, simply received, by all who would experience its blessed power. To the Romans, setting forth the ground of a sinner's hope before God; to the Galatians, combatting the soul-destroying error that the works of the saved were needed to supplement the works of the Saviour; to both alike the apostle holds up the great proof-text of Scripture, the outstanding illustration of the father of all them that believe; he tells Gentile and Jew alike that, “No hope can on the law be built, of justifying grace.” “Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness.” “Salvation is by faith, and by faith only.”

But now, suppose the apostle James to have another class of men to deal with, suppose the conduct of such men to lead him to contemplate justification and faith from another point of view: suppose him to be dealing with men of this sort,—men who had not the slightest objection to justification by faith, who accepted the doctrine *in toto*, and

who would have resented any implication to the contrary; men who were proud that they could, in this way, associate themselves with their father Abraham, being justified by faith, even as he, but who stopped there; who were content with this bare theoretical position, who never brought forth any of the fruits—never gave any of the evidences of faith; suppose him to have had to deal with men who quoted Abraham's example of justification by faith as their excuse for not needing to be justified by works, would you not have expected him to turn round upon them and say:—"You are altogether in error, you have entirely misapprehended Abraham's position; his position is at the very furthest remove from yours; your father Abraham was justified by works!" "Wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead" (not a thing that, in the form of head-faith, speculative faith, or any other name you may like to call it, was once alive, but is now dead, but literally a *no-thing* that never had existence)! why this very Abraham, your father, whom you think you are so like, he was justified by works—by works of the most completely manifesting kind, when he offered Isaac his son upon the altar, and that Scripture was fulfilled which said, "And Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness." These men, with whom the apostle is here dealing, knew, he believed, the Pauline doctrine of justification by faith, and that, at the fitting time, this was the doctrine he taught; but *he* knew this was not the truth they needed to have set before them now: it was not justification by faith they needed to hear, it was justification by works; works which would declare, make clear, that they were what they professed to be.

It is to be assumed then, as a matter self-evident, that Paul and James are in perfect accord on the great scriptural evangelical doctrine of justification by faith and not by works, as the ground of a sinner's acceptance by God, and the only question

which is raised by the passage under present discussion, is the following: whether James is treating of the faith which justifies the sinner, and which being living, active faith will necessarily manifest

Two different
views held
as to what
James says.

itself in living, active works; or whether it is not rather the justification of the believer, the justifying works which show he is a believer, which manifest the man to be what he says he is. On the one hand it is held that all that the apostle intends to say is that a man is justified by nothing else but a faith which produces works, that is, that he is setting forth substantially Paul's doctrine of the justification of the sinner; on the other hand, it is held that his language is too distinct and special to allow of this rendering, and that the only interpretation which comes up to the fulness of his words, is that which takes them to signify the justification of the believer, the manifestation by works that he is what he says he is. The latter is the interpretation which the words yield with least pressure; the apostle plainly says, "justified by works," and if there is a clear scriptural sense in which the words may be so understood, this is the sense to be preferred. "To justify the righteous" is a scriptural expression: it means, to declare him innocent; so also is the following: "Let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, that Thou mightest be justified in Thy sayings and overcome when thou art judged," meaning that God's sayings are justified when their truth is made clear. It is in this scriptural sense the apostle seems to use the word here; justified by works,—works which make clear to God and man that the professions are real, that the man is what he says he is. It was so in the case of Abraham, to which he refers, the special case of the offering up of Isaac, his son, he was justified by works, as is evident by the reply which Jehovah, immediately upon this, makes to him. "Now I *know* that thou fearest *Me*, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from Me." It is, it must be so in the case of all who are *justified by faith*, they must also be *justified by works*. That this rendering of the apostle's words is the right one, may also be inferred from the use of that word, "fulfilled." The word was fulfilled: but Abraham had been justified by faith fully twenty years before this, when he believed God's word: it can only mean, then, manifested, declared to be true. "Abraham was justified by works as well as by faith, that is, by the one he was evinced to be what he regarded himself in consequence of the

other. On account of his faith a person is treated as what he is *not*; on account of his works he is treated as what he *is*. In the former case he is pardoned as a sinner, in the latter he is approved as a saint. 'A man may say he has faith,' but unless it be made perfect by *works*, no one to whom he says it is bound to believe him." It is of importance to observe that either of these renderings is based on the fact of the agreement of James with Paul on the doctrine of justification by faith: the faith which in its nature produces justifying works. If there be not the works, there is not the faith; if there be the faith, there will be the works.

The apostle goes on to intimate that there is no exception to this; you may take the extremest cases, the furthest separate, the most unlike: Abraham on the one hand, Rahab on the other: if anyone has faith, he and it will be justified by the works which it will necessarily produce. The case of Rahab is a very interesting one, and from its very simplicity well adapted to set

The ex-
tremest case
to the point.

clearly before us the point of the apostle's argument. She had real faith in the God of Israel, very imperfect, very alloyed, but real: well, it was justified by works, works natural to the circumstances in which it found itself. Here is her faith: "I know that the Lord hath given you the land," &c. (Joshua ii. 9-11.) This was her faith: so she said, so she professed; well, how did it justify itself? Was not Rahab the harlot justified by works; when she had received the messengers and had sent them out another way? If there be faith, like a grain of mustard seed, it will quicken, it will cleave a way for itself through the dark earth, and even in the unenlightened heart of this poor, sinful Canaanitish woman let there but lodge itself this seed, "I know that the Lord hath given you this land," and it will come forth in efforts to help them to get it.

These are matters which vitally affect every one of us: they are questions, which most nearly of all questions, concern us before "Him with whom we have to do." It is quite possible to

These are
personal
matters.

treat them as mere theological dogmas, it is necessary to our eternal welfare to treat them as eternal truths, as truths which must become experimental

realities in our lives, if we are to stand in the judgment day, strip all that has been said of its merely theological garb, and there remain these two questions of the last importance to us all: How may we become just before God, and whence the grace by which we may be approved of God?

1. *How may we become just before God?* We are living the merest sense life till we confront this personal question. Live right lives? But what if our lives are wrong to begin with, what if we cannot live right lives, what if we must always live wrong lives if left to ourselves? We must be put right, taken out of this wrong way of living, our feet set on a firm path, and our goings established. To a man who once realises this, justification by faith will no longer be a mere dogma, it will be the very cry of his soul.

2. *How are we to live so as to show that we are right with God,* that we have been justified by faith? There is but one way—works. Our characters so transformed by the active, energetic principle of faith, that there will be no possibility of mistaking them at the slightest glance; the righteousness of Christ so inwrought into our hearts by faith in Him that we shall be sanctified, body, soul, and spirit, and presented blameless before Him, approved, accepted, justified by works. “Inasmuch as ye did it to the least of these my brethren, ye did it unto Me.”

This is the best answer to give to those who say the religion of Christ has served its day. This would be to show that justification by faith in Christ is as real and as blessed a thing in the hearts of His disciples now, as it was in his of whom it was written long ago,—“And he was called the Friend of God.”

GLASGOW.

PETER RUTHERFORD.



“Never tell any man that he can derive no good in his devotions from *this* or from *that*: abolish neither hope nor gratitude. God is pleased, I am convinced, at *every* effort to resemble Him, at *every* wish to remind both ourselves and others of His benefits.”—LUCIAN.

SEEDS OF SERMONS ON THE SECOND BOOK OF
THE KINGS.

A Great Privilege, Wickedness, and Ruin.

“FOR SO IT WAS,” &c.—2 *Kings* xvii. 7-25.

WE have used the first verses of this chapter in our last sketch, to set forth the *aspects of a corrupt nation*. The Israelitish people appear in that fragment of their history as an unfortunate inventor of wrong, a guilty worker of wrong, and a terrible victim of wrong. These nineteen verses, now under our notice, present to us three subjects of thought, a great national privilege, a great national wickedness, and a great national ruin.

I.—A GREAT NATIONAL PRIVILEGE. We learn herefrom that the Infinite Governor of the world had given them at least three great advantages, political freedom, right to the land, and the highest spiritual teaching. He had given them,

First: *Political freedom*. For ages they had been in political bondage, the mere

slaves of despots; but here we are told that God had “brought them out of the land of Egypt, from under the hand of Pharoah, of Egypt.” (Verse 7). When they crossed the Red Sea, entered the desert, and stepped into Palestine, they were civilly free; the chains that bound them so often then were completely broken, and each had the common rights of liberty. Political freedom is the inalienable right of all men, is one of the greatest blessings of a people, but one which in every age has been outraged by despots. The millions are groaning in every land still under political disabilities. He had given them—

Secondly: *A right to the land*. Canaan was the common right of all; true, it was divided amongst the ten

tribes, but this, not for the private interests of any, but for the good of all. What we call "landlordism" existed not, nor, as Blackstone (as well as the greatest political scientists) has said, should it ever have existed; it is an outrage on the common rights of mankind. When one thinks that all the land in Scotland, Ireland, Wales, and England is in the hands of 8,000 men, a number which could be crowded into Spurgeon's Tabernacle, and that thirty millions are dependent on them for the means of subsistence, it is impossible not to feel that Englishmen have a mighty wrong to crush. Archdeacon Paley, no mean authority, with his characteristic clearness and common sense, has the following remarkable words,—“If you should see a flock of pigeons in a field of corn, and if (instead of each one picking where and what it liked, taking just as much as it wanted and no more) you should see ninety-nine of them gathering all they got in a heap, reserving nothing for themselves but the chaff and the refuse, keeping this heap

for one, and that for the weakest, perhaps the worst pigeon of the flock, sitting round and looking on all the winter, whilst the one was devouring, throwing about, and wasting it; and if a pigeon more hardy or hungry than the rest, touched a grain of the hoard all the others instantly flying upon it and tearing it to pieces; if you should see this you would see nothing more than what is every day practised and established amongst men. Among men you see the ninety and nine toiling and scraping together a heap of superfluities for one (and this one too oftentimes the feeblest and worst of the whole set,—a child, a woman, a madman, or a fool), getting nothing for themselves all the while but a little of the coarsest of the provision which their own industry produces, looking quietly on while they see the fruits of all the labour spent or spoiled, and if one of the number take or touch a particle of the hoard the others joining against him and hanging him for the theft.” What boots collecting and publishing facts concerning the sufferings of

people and entitling the tractate the "*Bitter Cry of Outcast London*," unless something is done to put the land into the hands of the people, not by violence or spoliation, but by a calm and just legislation? Alas, even good men, through a weakness of judgment and the workings of a traditional faith, dream that by multiplying Churches and Chapels and plying all the agencies of a conventional religion they will hush the "bitter cry." How absurd! It is as Douglas Jerrold somewhere suggests, giving waggon-loads of tooth-picks to men who have no meat to eat. "Is not this the fast that I have appointed, saith the Lord?" Instead of making denominational capital out of these cries of poverty, all ministers of Christ should unite to compel our legislators to do justice to the oppressed. He gave them—

Thirdly: *The highest spiritual teaching.* "The Lord testified against Israel, and against Judah, by all the prophets, and by all the seers, saying, Turn ye from your evil ways, and keep My commandments and My statutes, according to

all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by My servants the prophets." (Ver. 13.) One of the fundamental needs of mankind is true *ethical* teaching, not the teaching of dogmas and ceremonies, but the teaching of immutable law, the "statutes of God."

These statutes are not only written on paper, but on every page of nature's magnificent volume, and on the tablets of human reason and conscience. "Do unto others as ye would have others do unto you." Genuine disciples of such teaching will evermore act rightly towards themselves, towards their fellow men, and towards their God. Notice—

II.—A GREAT NATIONAL WICKEDNESS. Possessing all these privileges, how acted these people—not merely the people of Israel, but the people of Judah as well? Was the sentiment of worship and justice regnant within them? Were they loyal to all that is beautiful, true, and good? Nay.

First: They *rejected God*. "They would not hear, but hardened their necks, like

to the neck of their fathers, that did not believe in the Lord their God," &c. (Verses 14, 15.) They declined the study of His statutes, and renounced His claim on their devotion.

Secondly: They *adopted idols*. Mark (1) the *earnestness* of their idolatry. With what unremitting zeal they promoted the cause of idolatry. "The children of Israel did secretly those things that were not right against the Lord their God, and they built them high places in all their cities." (Ver. 9.) It is also stated, "They made them molten images, even two calves, and made a grove, and worshipped all the host of Heaven, and served Baal." (Ver. 16.) Error on this earth is more active than truth, wrong is more industrious than right, the spirit of evil knows not rest, it goes to and fro on the face of the earth. Here, then is national wickedness. Are we, as a country, less wicked than the nation of Israel? I trow not. True, we are all, for the most part, theoretical Theists, but practical Atheists. For England ignores the Almighty. "It

might be said of us, "God is not in all our thoughts."

With lips they own Him Master, in life oppose His Word,
They ev'ry day deny Him, and yet they call Him Lord;
No more is their religion like His in life and deed,
Than painted grain on canvas is like the living seed.

Mark (2) The *cruelty* of their idolatry. "And they caused their sons and daughters to pass through the fire, and used divinations, and enchantments, and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the Lord." (Ver. 17.) Notice—

III.—GREAT NATIONAL RUIN. "Therefore the Lord was very angry with Israel, and removed them out of His sight." (Ver. 18.) "The Lord rejected all the seed of Israel, and afflicted them, and delivered them into the hand of spoilers, until He had cast them out of His sight." (Ver. 20.)

First: Their ruin involved the entire loss of *their country*. "So was Israel carried away out of their own land to Assyria, unto this day." (Ver. 23.) Expatriation is an enormous trial.

Secondly: Their ruin involved the loss of their

national existence. "The Lord removed them out of His sight." (Ver. 18.) The ten tribes are gone, and no one knows whether they are now worth looking after, for they were a miserable type of humanity. "The kingdom of the ten tribes," says Dr. Blackie, "was never restored, nor did the dispersed of Israel ever attempt to return in a body to their land. More than two hundred years of idolatry and wickedness have been followed by more than two thousand years of dispersion and alienation. Having said in their hearts to God, 'Depart from us,' God said to them, 'Depart from Me.' The divorce was completed, and till a reconciliation shall take place, its sad, dark fruits must remain."

Thirdly: Their ruin involved the *retributive agency of Heaven*. The Assyrians were only the instruments. It is God's plan to punish the wicked by the wicked. "No wonder that amid so gross a perversion of the worship of the true God, and the national propensity to do reverence to idols, the Divine patience was exhausted, and that the God whom they had forsaken by violating the national covenant, an adherence to which formed their title to the occupation of Canaan, permitted them to go into captivity, that they might learn the difference between His service and that of their despotic conquerors."

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"It is possible for us who minister in holy things to preach from, 'Behold the Man,' so that *the man beheld is the man preaching*, and not the Man preached of. I have known it sometimes when it might be pure gold that was shown, but you could not tell, for it was covered with the poor tinsel that was tacked on it. The flower might be the Rose of Sharon, but you could not say, for it was painted, and that destroyed its beauty and fragrance too."—Dr. CHOWN.

SEEDS OF SERMONS ON THE EPISTLE TO TITUS.

No. II.

Church Order.

“FOR THIS CAUSE LEFT I THEE IN CRETE, THAT THOU SHOULDEST SET IN ORDER THE THINGS THAT ARE WANTING, AND ORDAIN ELDERS IN EVERY CITY, AS I HAD APPOINTED THEE: IF ANY BE BLAMELESS, THE HUSBAND OF ONE WIFE, HAVING FAITHFUL CHILDREN NOT ACCUSED OF RIOT, OR UNRULY. FOR A BISHOP MUST BE BLAMELESS, AS THE STEWARD OF GOD; NOT SELF-WILLED, NOT SOON ANGRY, NOT GIVEN TO WINE, NO STRIKER, NOT GIVEN TO FILTHY LUCRE; BUT A LOVER OF HOSPITALITY, A LOVER OF GOOD MEN, SOBER, JUST, HOLY, TEMPERATE; HOLDING FAST THE FAITHFUL WORD AS HE HATH BEEN TAUGHT, THAT HE MAY BE ABLE BY SOUND DOCTRINE BOTH TO EXHORT AND TO CONVINCE THE GAINSAYERS.”—*Titus* i. 5-9.

TITUS was now at Crete. “Crete, over whose Christian population Titus had been placed by Paul, was a well-known, large, and populous island in the Mediterranean. It lies geographically further south than any of the European islands, and, roughly speaking, almost at an equal distance from each of the three Old World continents, Europe, Asia, Africa. We identify it with the Caphtor of the Old Testament. (Deut. ii. 23.; Jer. xlvii. 4.; Amos ix. 7.) In modern times it is known by us as Candia. Very early it was the scene of an

advanced civilization. In the *Odyssey* it is mentioned as possessing ninety cities: in the *Iliad* as many as one hundred. Metullus added it, B.C. 69, to the Roman dominion. In the days of Augustus it was united into one province with Cyrene. It abounded with Jews of wealth and influence; this we learn from the testimony of Philo and of Josephus. It probably received the Gospel from some of those of Crete who, we are expressly told, were present when the Spirit was poured on the apostles on the first Pentecost after the resurrec-

tion. (Acts ii. 11.) The apparently flourishing state of Christianity on the island at this time, was, in great measure, no doubt, owing to the residence and labours among them of the Apostle St. Paul, whose work appears to have been mainly directed to preaching the Gospel, and to increasing the number of the converts, which, from the wording of verse 5, was evidently very great, Elders being required in every city."

The following thoughts are deducible from these words.

I.—THAT IN EVERY CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY THERE SHOULD BE THE MAINTENANCE OF ORDER. "*Thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting.*" "The words," says Canon Spence, "explain the cause of Titus' appointment in Crete. The '*things that are wanting*' were what Paul meant, no doubt, to have done himself, but was prevented by being hurried away, for him the end was nigh at hand. These '*things*' were want of Church officials, lack of Church government, want of cohesion between the churches of the island; in a word, there was plenty of Christian life

but no Christian organisation as yet in Crete. It was rather a number of Christian brotherhoods than one."

"*Set in order.*" God is the God of order, as witnessed in the harmonious operations of nature. Disorder, both in the mental and moral domains, is abnormal and pernicious; it implies evermore a deviation from the established law of Almighty love. A disordered body is diseased, so is a disordered soul. A disordered family lacks the condition both of peace and prosperity. A disordered Church, for many reasons, is the greatest of all evils. Confusion in a Church is a calumny of Christ, and obstructive at once to its peace, power, prosperity, and usefulness. "Order," says Southey, "is the sanity of the mind, the health of the body, the peace of the city, the security of the state. As the beams to a house, as the bones to the microcosm of man, so is order to all things." Notice

II.—That the maintenance of Church order may REQUIRE THE MINISTRY OF SPECIAL SUPERINTENDENTS. The words elder, bishop, pastor, &c., all refer to the same office, and

that office means superintendent episcopacy, or overseer. "These presbyters were to be most carefully selected, according to the instructions Titus must remember Paul giving him, on some previous occasion." There was to be some one to overlook all. Such a one is to maintain order, not by legislating but by loving; not by the assumption of authority, but by a humble devotion to the spiritual interests of all. The ministry of such a man is needed because of the many elements of discord that exist, even in the best communities, such as temper, self-will, pride, &c. Notice—

III.—That the superintendents SHOULD BE MEN OF DISTINGUISHED EXCELLENCE, "*Blameless*," &c. The highest offices in Church and State should always be filled by the highest characters. The morally small man, elevated to a high office, is an incongruity and a curse; and yet how common is such a sight. Moral serfs on thrones, moral rogues on the bench, moral sycophants in the ecclesiastical world. Here Paul denotes the style of men required to

superintend the Church,—*"If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot, or unruly, &c."* "The expressions," says Dr. Fairbairn, "indicate one possessed of that prudence and self-control, that uprightness of character, that kindness of character, that kind, generous, disinterested gracious disposition, which were fitted to command the respect, and secure the confidence and affection of a Christian community,—one altogether such as might serve for a pattern to a flock over whom he was appointed to preside, and guide their affairs with discretion." The qualifications of this office are here given in (1) A negative form. *"Not self-willed, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre."* The qualifications are given in (2) a positive form. *"The husband of one wife, having faithful children, a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate, holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught."*

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Seedlings.

Children—Divine Gifts.

“LO, CHILDREN ARE AN HERITAGE OF THE LORD.”—*Psalm cxxvii.* 3.

CHILDREN come not into the world by chance or fate. God sends them as His gifts.

I.—They are gifts of GREAT VALUE.

First: They are of great value *in themselves*. (1) Ponder the *intellectual* possibilities of a child. Intellect, imagination, memory, &c. In the babe, which the mother for the first time presses to her bosom, there may be powers that will work out into the greatest of poets, sages, apostles, reformers, even angels. (2) Ponder the *emotional* possibilities of a child. What capabilities of love and hate, wrath and tenderness, rapture and misery.

Secondly: They are of great value to the *parents*. (1) Look at the influence of a child on the mind of a parent. It unseals a new fountain of love. It creates a new world of interest, it supplies new motives for diligence, sobriety, and virtue. (2) Look at the power of a child to bless the parent. It comes with the filial instinct deeply planted in its

nature, an instinct which, as it rightly develops itself, makes the parent the object of its strongest and purest affection, its most loyal and devoted service. When God gives to parents a loving and loyal child, He gives that which is of more worth to them than lordly estates, or even mighty kingdoms.

“Thou little child,
Thy mother’s joy, thy father’s hopes,
thou bright,
Pure dwelling, where two fond hearts
keep their gladness ;
Thou little potentate of love, who
comest
With solemn, sweet dominion to the
old,
Who see thee in thy merry fancies
charged
With the grave embassage of that
dear past
When they were young, like thee,
thou vindicator
Of God, thou living witness against
all men
Who have been babes—thou ever-
lasting promise
Which no man keeps—thou portrait
of our nature,
Which in despair and pride we scorn
and worship,
Thou household god, whom no icono-
clast
Hath broken.”

II.—They are gifts INVOLVING GREAT TRUSTS. What is the trust? Rightly to train that child to discharge the mission for which it is sent into the world. And what training does this involve? A training to think with accuracy, freedom, and force: to love with purity, disinterestedness, and self-sacrificing devotion: to act with invincible devotion to the right, with loving loyalty to God. "Train up a child in the way he should go when he is young, and when he is old he will not depart from it." This is the trust involved.

III.—They are gifts that may BECOME GREAT CURSES. Man has a faculty of perversion. In nature he can turn food to poison, make the quickening sunbeam his own destroyer, and transform the blessings of Providence into curses. Thus he can deal with his own child, his choicest gift from God. The mother can turn the sweet babe into a fiend, a fiend that will bring down the grey hairs of herself and husband with sorrow to the grave. In no way, perhaps, is she more successful in effecting this, than by that foolish love which pampers the appetites, flatters the vanity, and ministers to self-indulgence. The fondest mothers are hence, oftentimes, the greatest curses to their children and to posterity.

CONCLUSION. — Look not at children as accidents, mistakes, nuisances; but as the choicest gifts of God to the race, aye, and more than gifts, the last and purest revelations of Himself. "I am fond of children," says *Thomas Binney*, "I think them the poetry of the world, the great flowers of our hearths and homes: little conjurors, with their natural magic, evoking by their spells what delights and enriches all ranks, and equalises the different classes of society. Often as they bring with them anxieties and cares, and live to occasion sorrow and grief, we should get on very badly without them. Only think if there was never anything to be seen but grown-up men and women! How we should long for the sight of a little child! Every infant comes into the world like a delegated prophet, the harbinger and herald of good tidings, whose office it is to turn the hearts of fathers to the children, and to draw the disobedient to the wisdom of the just. A child softens and purifies the heart, warming it, and melting it by its gentle presence, it enriches the soul by new feelings, and awakens within it what is favourable to virtue. It is a beam of light, a fountain of love, a teacher whose lessons few can resist. Infants recall us from much that engen-

ders and encourages selfishness, that freezes the affections, roughens the manners, indurates the heart; they brighten the home, deepen love, invigorate exertion, infuse courage, and vivify and sustain

the charities of life. It would be a terrible world, I do think, if it were not embellished by little children."

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Days of the Christian Year.

Matthew xxi. 1-11.

(First Sunday in Advent.)

IN stately order Jesus and His disciples moved toward the sacred city, the Lord Himself on a colt—on which it comported as well with oriental ideas of honour as with Christian ideas of peace for Him to ride,—the disciples immediately surrounding Him, and a company of the curious and of the devout surrounding them: as they went onward, others joined their ranks, till the simple cavalcade swelled into a triumphal procession. As they neared Jerusalem, the contagion of new-born faith and of unbounded joy spread, from centre to circumference, from the disciples to the multitude, from the aged, whose long-cherished hopes seemed on the eve of a glorious fulfilment, to the young children who shouted their praises from hearts from which hope and joy are never absent long: "the whole city was moved."

But what is the explanation of it all? There is something exceptional in this scene, something unlike the ways of Him who "did not strive, nor cry, nor cause His voice to be heard in the streets," who, on other occasions, so strongly repressed excitement and notoriety. It was—

I.—A VALUABLE INCIDENTAL PROOF OF CHRIST'S POWER;—a power which He mercifully restrained. It shewed how easily our Lord could have taken to Himself earthly power, temporal sovereignty, if He had chosen to do so. There is, perhaps, no single thing more difficult to do than to hold conscious power in check; there is no truer triumph than to be able to crush an adversary, and to refuse to do so for the sake of others. This scene suggests to us the restraint which our Lord exercised on Himself throughout His course. How easily could He have assumed command, have silenced His foes, have wielded the sceptre, if He

had chosen to take that course. But He contented Himself with this one brief flash of honour, choosing rather the path of suffering, of shame, of death, in order that *we* might be made "kings and priests unto God, being washed from our sins in His own blood."

II.—A STRIKING INDEX OF HIS ACCEPTANCE WITH THE PEOPLE.

No one can say that our Lord's teaching was not profound: it was deep as the very fountains of truth. He struck far below the surface and fathomed the deep places of the human soul. Yet while all philosophers had made their appeal to the cultured of their time and land, this Great Teacher addressed Himself to the people, and was appreciated by them. "The common people heard Him gladly." The officers of the Sanhedriem declared that "never man spake like this man." So now, while Scribes and Pharisees stand by silent and sulky, or are even fain to ask Christ Himself to still the agitation, a ringing voice of welcome comes from the multitude of men, and women, and children. A striking historical instance, and a graphic pictorial illustration this, of the world-wide and age-long truth that the things of God and of eternity are hidden from the wise and prudent and are revealed unto babes. The

essential truths of the kingdom have ever been more apprehensible, and the offers of Divine mercy and friendship more appreciable, to the humble-hearted, the lowly-minded, and the ill-conditioned, than to those who have stood on the high places of culture and of power. The heights of heavenly wisdom are steeper to the student than to the child.

III.—A BEAUTIFUL EMBLEM OF A SACRED TRUTH.

The Messiah was to be a king: to this, prophecy pointed with unfailing finger, and on this, Jewish faith rested with a gathering hope. The Son of David was to be a Sovereign greater than his earthly ancestor. When Jesus thus rode in simple triumph into Jerusalem, He said, "I am the King you wait for, behold your Sovereign." That extreme simplicity, and the transciency of this demonstration pointed to another rule in another realm. That regal state in Jerusalem was only the outward emblem of a spiritual sovereignty immeasurably higher and nobler. Sweet to His ear may have been the acclamations of the people, and the hosannas of the children, but sweeter far to Him is the resolve of a heart which, finding no peace elsewhere, goes heavy laden unto Him for rest: sweeter far to His ear is the voice of man or woman, or little child, saying,

"Meek and lowly Saviour, mighty and merciful Sovereign, let me sit at Thy feet, and learning of Thee, let me enter Thy service and do Thy holy will, let me take from Thy royal hand the grace and strength which my guilty and helpless spirit needs."

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Luke xxi. 33.

(Second Sunday in Advent.)

"HEAVEN AND EARTH SHALL PASS AWAY : BUT MY WORD SHALL NOT PASS AWAY."

THESE striking words suggest to us—

I.—CHRIST'S CONSCIOUS CONNECTION WITH THE ETERNAL FATHER. Had there not been in Him a profound and abiding consciousness that, in a sense far transcending our own experience, God dwelt in Him and He in God, these words would have been wholly indefensible : they would have been in the last degree immodest. Proceeding from any other than the Son of God Himself, they would have utterly repelled us, and they would have thrown grave discredit on every other utterance from the same lips. It was because He was Divine and felt the authority which His Divinity conveyed that He could use such words as these without

any trace of assumption, retaining the meekness and lowliness of heart which He claimed to possess, and the possession of which neither friend nor enemy has attempted to dispute.

II.—THE PERMANENCE OF TRUTH, COMPARED WITH THE TRANSITORINESS OF MATTER. It is only in a limited and figurative sense that we can speak of material things as eternal. The hour comes when they will perish : indeed they are perishing as we speak. The immovable rocks, "the everlasting hills," are being disintegrated by sun and rain ; the fixed earth rises and falls ; the "changeless rivers" are cutting a new course for their waters. Only truth abides ; it is only the words in which the thought of The Eternal is expressed that do not pass away. The truth which won the consent of the patriarchal mind, which enlarged the soul and sanctified the human spirit in the most ancient times, now commands our homage, and will for ever raise and purify the souls of men. Fashions do not touch it with their finger ; revolutions cannot overthrow it ; dispensations leave it in its integrity.

III.—THE IMMORTALITY OF THE THOUGHTS OF CHRIST. (1) We have found Him a true prophet : events have happened according to His word. (2) We are finding

Him to be the Teacher of truth to-day. He has that to say to us, which, in our better moods and worthier moments, we hunger and thirst to hear. He has, for us, in His deathless words, salvation from our sin, comfort in our sorrow, sanctity in our joy, strength in our struggle, companionship in our loneliness, peace and hope in our decline and death. Unto whom shall we go if we sit at His feet no longer? (3) We shall find Him the Source of truth in the other and after life. Death will not make His words less true, even if it makes some of them less applicable than they are here and now. His thoughts will never lose their hold upon our heart, never cease to affect and shape our course. The truths which Jesus spoke eighteen centuries ago will beautify our life and bless our spirit in the farthest epochs and the highest spheres of the heavenly world. Surely (a) if we would render the truest service to ourselves we shall do our utmost to fill our minds with the thoughts of Christ; and (b) if we would best serve our race we shall consider in how many ways we can impress His thoughts upon the minds of men and weave them into the institutions of the world.

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Matthew xi. 7-10.

(Third Sunday in Advent.)

WHEN we hear our Lord thus speaking of a man in terms of cordial and, indeed, enthusiastic praise, we feel such commendation is most extraordinary, honourable, and encouraging; (a) *extraordinary*, for thus, though in a world of erring and sinful men, the lips of wisdom and holiness utter an encomium on a man. Moreover, the eye of Him who thus spake was not less searching than His lips were veracious. Often He had to rebuke, oftener to pity, now He praises. Such commendation is (b) *honouring*. It is good to have the approval of good men, specially if they be wise as well as good. The approval of one such is worth thunders of thoughtless applause. How unspeakably above such highest approval of a good and wise man is a eulogium from the Son of God. It is (c) *encouraging*. It makes us feel that there may be attainments in our character on which Christ may smile; a spirit cherished in a human heart which Christ may honour. He is not, as some heathens conceive the Divine eye, angrily and sternly seeking for defects, flaws, evils, but wanting to find in all what won His admiring verdict on John Baptist. We have in the passage, then, a fact that is extraordinary,

honouring, encouraging; viz.: *the Saviour praising man*. Three points are notable—

I.—THE SAVIOUR DOES NOT PRAISE MEN ACCORDING TO OUTWARD CIRCUMSTANCE. Of whom does He utter this eulogy? A king, a courtier, a successful merchant, a fortunate prizeman in any of life's struggles? Oh, no! of a man immured in a dungeon; of a man who was the sport and prey of a weak monarch; of a man whose life-work seemed to have collapsed into a miserable failure. Yet *that* man He wreathes with fame. So, often, Jesus declares the pauper, rich; the slave, free; the condemned, honourable and famous. Not by his environments, his status, or successes, does the true Judge, judge any.

II.—THE SAVIOUR DOES NOT HONOUR MEN ON ACCOUNT OF PUBLIC OPINION CONCERNING THEM. Nothing is commoner in many classes and populations, than to give a man an ovation simply because elsewhere he is popular. Of fame it is strikingly true, "to him that hath shall be given." But Jesus contravenes public opinion, corrects it, defies it. For He lauds a man whom the worldly evidently scorned, and of whom even his own disciples were beginning to have their fears. His judgment is just, and is based,

not on the shifting foundation of popular favour or blame, but the eternal standard of absolute rectitude.

III.—THE SAVIOUR HONOURS MEN ACCORDING TO THEIR CHARACTER. Character is almost equally independent of environments and of reputation. But it alone is the true "*causa honoris*." Many elements in character are honourable. They are revealed at different times, and by different tests. Those in John's character, that Jesus considered so highly praiseworthy, were (a) *Stability*. He was not like the waving reeds, with whom he, and the crowds that followed them were so familiar, on the banks of the Jordan, reeds bending with every breeze, carried, now this way, now that, by every current. (b) *Strength*; not soft and effeminate, but vigorous and manly.

EDITOR.

John i. 19, 28.

(*The Fourth Sunday in Advent.*)

EVERY worker is, from time to time, interrogated as to himself as well as his work. The cry is not only, what are you doing? but, who are you? Sometimes messengers, friendly or unfriendly, ask this; sometimes the very claims and pressure of his work seem to

ask it; sometimes a man is forced to challenge himself. But whatever the form of the interrogation, and whatever its source, it is well when a worker for the world's good is marked by the characteristics that distinguish John Baptist in his utterances now before us. There is here, as marking the true Christian worker—

I.—A DISTINCT CONCEPTION REGARDING HIS MISSION. There is nothing dreamy, vague, hazy here. He does not deceive himself, as some "false Christs" seem to have done, with the proud delusion that he was the Messiah. Nor does he confuse his mission with that of Elijah, whom in so many respects he resembled; nor with the great prophet whom men were expecting. He knows his own individuality, recognises his own mission, and with a declaration that is at once full of poetic force and accurate distinctness he says, "I am the voice," &c. Well is it for us when we know our niche in God's great temple, our quarter in God's great vineyard, our spot on God's great battlefield. John did.

II.—A LOYAL OBEDIENCE IN THE DISCHARGE OF HIS MISSION. It was his unique duty to baptise with the baptism of repentance,—using water as the symbol of the universally needed cleansing, and preaching all the truth that cere-

mony so powerfully adumbrated. And he set himself assiduously to his task. Thousands were baptised with this baptism of John's. The repeated ritual, and apparently the equally repeated warning to repent, filled up his daily task. Sent to baptise,—hear how loyally he declares, "I baptise with water." Whatever our duty is, whether it be Paul's who rejoiced that he was not sent to baptise, or John's who clearly was, let us do it. Obedience is the sign of service.

III.—A HUMBLE SPIRIT WITH REGARD TO HIS MISSION AND HIMSELF. (1) He scarcely *depreciates his mission*, but he does in comparison with that of The Christ. He says here, "I baptise with water," a common, perishable, material element, only a symbol of the true. But, as he afterwards declares, The Christ baptises with "The Holy Ghost." What an infinite contrast; what an infinite inferiority,—"water," and "The Holy Ghost." It is ever well for us to see how poor our work is even at its best. We are but as "a voice," that is all; we are, as it were, "baptising with water," that is all. There is no room for pride. (2) *He completely abases himself*. For he tells of The Coming One, already present indeed, whose shoe's latchet he is unworthy to unloose; for whom

it would be an honour to discharge the most menial service. How strange this depreciation of his own work and abasement of himself must have sounded to the ears of Pharisees. It is too strange still. But the true worker will ever be the man who while he realises his individual duty, and loyally does it, yet feels his own work is very poor and mean, and he, himself, is as nothing. That is the secret of power, that the crown of character. Such men never die, their light is only lost like the morning star's in the brightness of sunrise and of endless day.

EDITOR.

Luke ii. 10.

(Christmas Day.)

CHRISTIANITY A GREAT JOY.

THESE words might be the Church's anthem about the whole mission of our Divine Lord, and every event in it, whether Ascension, Resurrection, Crucifixion, Temptation, or as in the Angelic song, His Birth. His religion is a great joy.

I.—ITS INSTITUTIONS indicate that it is a great joy. Thus we might show with regard to (1) *Its Day*. "The first day of the week," what a monument of victory! what associations of blessing from the early Church till

now! It is an emblazoned initial on the illuminated scroll of Christian Life. (2) *Its Book*, which contains the record of the golden age that is gone, and the promise of that which is to come, above all records "the Life that is the Light of Men." (3) *Its Sanctuary*. No bloody altars of sacrifice, but "House of Prayer," "My Father's House." (4) *Its Sacraments* of Baptism and the Lord's Supper; the one telling of the Divine sonship of all souls, the other of the Communion with men of the Divine Son. Both proclaiming Love unutterable in mere words, and, therefore, enshrined in symbols.

II.—ITS RESULTS indicate that it is a great joy. They are (1) *Direct*, as when man is reconciled to God;—the prodigal at home again and all life wearing new lustre. (2) *Secondary*, as when in its track civilisation, education, liberty are found. No one of all the works of Christianity, either on the individual or on the nation, is other than beneficent. Spurious Christianity has wrought incalculable mischiefs, and wreaked terrific calamities. But the Religion of "The Beatitudes," of "the Golden Rule," of "the Lamb of God," has ever alleviated suffering, broken tyrannies, scattered darkness.

III.—ITS GREAT DOCTRINES indicate that it is a great joy. Such as (1) and primarily, the *Fatherhood of God*; (2) *Redemption from sin and sorrow by the Son of God*; (3) *The final conquest of Evil by Christ*. "He must reign." What deeper joy than to know that Incarnate Purity, Truth, Love is to be regnant. Well may the Birth of Christ awaken, as it did at Bethlehem, in angels, in women, and even in old men, songs of gladness. For it ushered in a Religion which is "a great joy." EDITOR.

Matthew i. 21.

(First Sunday after Christmas.)

THIS is the last and completest prophecy concerning our Saviour. It gives Him the Name by which the world knows Him; and it describes the great work He is ever accomplishing. His name and His work harmonize. The first is not, as often, a satire on the second, nor is the second more excellent than the first. Jesus: the Perfect Name of a Perfect Worker. His work, as set out in His name, and in this prediction of His mission, is—

I.—A WORK OF MOST BLESSED PURPOSE. It is to save men "from their sins." The blessedness of such a work is evident as we note

that (1) *Sin is itself the greatest of all miseries*. It is (a) *deeper* than all others, for its hold is not on institutions merely, or the bodily organism alone, but on the spirit of a man, and "a wounded spirit who can bear?" It is (b) *vaster* than all others, for it pervades all lands, permeates all homes and hearts. What zone, or century, or man is free from its shadow and blight? It is (c) *more abiding* than all others, for change of scene, or indeed mere change of world does not enable a soul to evade it. "O wretched man, who shall deliver me?" Moreover, note (2) *Sin the source of all other miseries*. Poverty, pain, ignorance, strife, death itself, are but leaves on this upas tree, streams from this Stygian river. "Sin brought death into our world, and all our woe." Let sin go, and all that seems adverse would be but a discipline to the brave, or a problem to the thoughtful, not a woe to the broken-hearted. To save from such sin is clearly a work of blessed purpose. It is—

II.—A WORK OF VAST MAGNITUDE. The magnitude of Christ's salvation may be realised by dwelling (1) *On the multitudes of the saved*. "His people," who are they? what their race, their number? "A great multitude whom no man," &c. (Rev. viii. 9, &c.); (2) *On the nature of*

salvation. Salvation is the remission of sins, which includes its forgiveness and its destruction, *i. e.*, its complete "putting away." Infinite resources are needed for such a work; all the energies of Righteousness, of Wisdom, and Love are called into play! (3) *On the fact that this salvation is wrought by Jesus personally.* "It

is He that shall save." Not by a system of ideas only, not by a delegated power, but by His own personal relations with every individual soul, so that He cries, "Somebody hath touched Me; virtue is gone out of Me." Truly the work His name indicates is blessed and vast beyond all words.

EDITOR.

THE THREE COMINGS OF CHRIST.—The Scripture speaks of three comings of our Lord Jesus Christ. Two of them are those which are mentioned in the noble Collect for Advent Sunday: the historical coming, "in great humility" more than eighteen centuries ago, and the future coming "in glorious majesty" at a day and an hour when we think not.

There is yet a third coming which, at this season, we ought not to forget—the present coming of Christ into the hearts of His true servants, and through them into the world. This we should call neither a historical coming, nor a future coming, but a spiritual coming. Each of these three comings is attested by express words of Christ Himself, to say nothing of the declarations of the apostles and evangelists. Of the first He says, "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth." Of the second He says, "Hereafter shall ye see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power and coming in the clouds of heaven." Of the third He says, "I will not leave you comfortless, I will come to you"; "Behold, I stand at the door and knock!"—*From Harrow School Sermons by* MONTAGU BUTLER.

Breviaries.

Wisdom the Source and Sovereign of Worlds.

"HE HATH MADE THE EARTH BY HIS POWER, HE HATH ESTABLISHED THE WORLD BY HIS WISDOM, AND HATH STRETCHED OUT THE HEAVENS BY HIS DISCRETION."—*Jeremiah* x. 12.

THESE words give us two ideas concerning the universe. I.—It is ORGANISED BY WISDOM: "He hath established the world by His wisdom." This stands opposed to two absurd cosmological theories. It stands opposed to the idea of (1) The *eternity* of the universe. The universe is not eternal in its elements, or combinations. There was a period far back in the abysses of eternity, when there was nothing,—when the Absolute One lived alone. It stands opposed to the idea of (2) The *contingent origin* of the universe. It sprang from no fortuitous concourse of atoms: "By wisdom hath He founded the earth," &c. God has hollowed out the oceans, and arranged the systems of clouds. The scientific student of nature sees design and exquisite adaptations in every part of nature: "By His knowledge the depths are broken up." "We are raised by science," says *Lord Brougham*, "to an understanding of the infinite wisdom and goodness which the Creator has displayed in all His works. Not a step can we take in any direction without perceiving the most extraordinary traces of design; and the skill, everywhere conspicuous, is calculated in so vast a proportion of instances to promote the happiness of living creatures, and especially ourselves, that we feel no hesitation in concluding that if we knew the whole scheme of Providence, every part would appear in harmony with a plan of absolute benevolence. Independently, however of this most consoling inference the delight is inexpressible of being able to follow the marvellous works of the Great Author of nature, and to trace the unbounded power and exquisite skill which are exhibited by the most minute, as well as the mightiest parts of His system." Concerning the universe, notice II.—It is organised by the WISDOM OF ONE BEING, "He" the Lord God. It is not arranged on a plan which is the outcome of many intelligences. One intellect drafted the whole. Every part of the stupendous engine, even to the smallest

pin, was sketched by Him who has no counsellor, and whom none can instruct. (1) The unity of the universe shows this. There is the unity of style, operation, and purpose. (2) The Word of God declares this: "In the beginning God created," &c. "Thou, Lord, in the beginning, hast laid the foundation of the earth." The Bible cosmogony alone agrees with the deductions of true science, the intuitions of the soul, and the claims of religion. "He is the mighty Cause of causes mighty. Cause uncaused! Sole Root of nature!"

LONDON.

DAVID THOMAS, D.D.

The Eagle; a Parable of God.

"AS AN EAGLE STIRRETH UP HER NEST, FLUTTERETH OVER HER YOUNG, SPREADETH ABROAD HER WINGS, TAKETH THEM, BEARETH THEM ON HER WINGS."—*Deut.* xxxii. 11.

As to the *fact*, read the testimony given in Smith's Dictionary of the Bible (*sub voce* "Eagle"). I.—THE DIVINE AIM: Spiritual education. (1) *Its character*. Educing the latent energies and powers of the soul. (2) *Its importance*. For the bird; for the soul. Character. Higher attainment. Nobler enjoyment. Conversion good, but not all. (3) *Its difficulty*. Do not think that all will naturally follow conversion. We love the nest of ease, and are easily satisfied with slender attainments, or none. Education is a discipline *ab extra*. "As an eagle . . . so the Lord." II.—THE DIVINE METHOD. (1) *Disturbance*. The tendency to settle down is strong in communities, churches, and individuals. Hence, the ministry of affliction. Some misread events: "All things are against me." Others interpret their significance: "All things work together for good." (2) *Example*. How potent. The bird "fluttereth," &c. So the lofty. Have you never felt the "fluttering?" (3) *Aid*. Eminence is power of Christ's life, and of the sainted dead; of noble natures and never easy of attainment. Christian greatness in itself difficult enough to achieve, but what encouragement. Strength, though slight, grows with each effort and exercise. Over all hovers loving vigilance. Whilst direct help is variously bestowed: "beareth," &c. Be not weary. Remember God's aim, work, and aid. "They that wait upon the Lord shall mount up as on eagle's wings."

BRISTOL.

J. P. ALLEN, M.A.

Christ Parting from His Disciples.

“AND HE LED THEM OUT AS FAR AS TO BETHANY,” &c.—*Luke* xxiv. 50-51.

THE disciples of our Lord had, among other duties, to bear witness to the fact of His resurrection. It was not needful that they, in order to this, should see Him come out of His grave. They saw Him crucified, saw Him hang in death on the cross, and had ample proof of His interment. If they saw Him alive afterwards that would be sufficient. This they did. Whether it was more needful that they should see Him leave the world in order to their being satisfied as to the fact of His ascension, than it was that they should see Him come out of His grave in order to their being satisfied as to the fact of His resurrection, I will not say. That it was desirable may be fairly assumed. “*He was parted from them.*” Not in spirit, only in body. As to His Divine presence, He was still with them and ever would be. He is just as truly with His servants to-day. I.—THE PARTING HERE WAS NECESSARY. It may have been painful, and, to the disciples, probably, at the instant, was so, but it was a necessity. As it behoved our Lord to suffer and die, so it behoved Him to rise from the dead and enter into His glory. His work—His priestly work—consisted in two great divisions, EXPIATION and INTERCESSION. Having made the former, He must now enter upon the latter. Necessity was laid upon Him. *The agreeable must give way to the expedient.* But our Divine Father, in taking from us one blessing, always sends another and a greater. (John xvi. 6-15.) II.—THE PARTING HERE WAS VERY TENDER. It took place not in anger, as it might have done, but in love and compassion. “He was *parted* from them,” torn away, as it were, from their embrace. “Having loved them He loved them unto the end.” They had rendered themselves utterly unworthy of this. When He most needed the help, which by their presence and sympathy they could have given Him, they forsook Him, and fled. In His hearing, probably, Peter, with oaths, denied that he ever knew Him. When false witnesses were swearing away His life, not one of them stepped forth and witnessed for Him. Yes, He might have left them under the hiding of His face. But that would have been unlike Him, and contrary to His own teaching. (Matt. xviii. 21-22.) “*Whilst He blessed them He was parted from them.*” III.—THE PARTING HERE WAS ONLY TEMPORARY. When comforting the disciples at

the supper table, Jesus had said that the separation would be only for a *little while*, that at the end of that little while "He would come again and receive them to Himself, that where He was there they should be also." In their case this had been fulfilled. They, long ages ago, left the battle-field and reached the crown. The same shall be true of us, and the saints at large. We are not to be away from the Father's house and our Saviour's home away. "In a little while and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry." In a few short years and we shall meet Him whom having not seen we love. "Where I am, there also shall My servants be." "Behold I come quickly and My reward is with Me." "Even so come, Lord Jesus."

PENZANCE.

J. W. SAMPSON.

Love to Christ.

"YE WOULD LOVE ME."—*John* viii. 42.

WE select these words about Christ, as an object of man's love, because they are the first of which we have any record. Doubtless in His childhood, youth, and often in all His intercourse with those around Him throughout His life, Jesus must have made it plain that He would *accept* human love, that He *expected* it, *yearned* for it, *claimed* it. "Lovest thou Me" is His appeal to humanity; and may not a fairer dawn than that on Lake of Galilee yet find humanity, long apostate, adoringly responding, "Thou knowest that I love Thee." Let us notice— I.—Love to Christ: A FACT. It was in (a) His *incarnate* life. "The multitudes," &c. (b) In the *early apostolic Church*: "Grace be with all those that love the Lord Jesus." (c) In *entire history* of Church. Read, *e.g.*, Farrar's narrative of Saintly Workers—Monks, Franciscans, Martyrs, Missionaries. (d) *The experience* of those to-day who are conscious of fervent attachment, intelligent affection for Him. II.—Love to Christ: A POWER. (a) *Righteousness is a personal relation*: and love to Him rectifies men to God and men. (b) *Resemblance is the result of reverential love*. (c) *Consolation is found in personal communion*. III.—Love to Christ: AN OBLIGATION. (a) His *character* claims our love. (b) His *work* demands our love. Enquire, in conclusion, First: What are the *signs* of love? Second: What is the *way* to love?

EDITOR.

Neglect.

“IF WE NEGLECT.”—*Hebrews* ii. 3.

THE words out of the midst of which our text is taken contain some of the most solemn thoughts language can embody, viz. : (1) *a great human peril*, (2) *a wonderful Divine provision*, (3) *a terrific possibility*. To this third let us now turn, noticing— I.—THE MISERY ARISING FROM NEGLECT. (1) *In the lower or material realm*, e.g., industrial, sanitary, commercial. (2) *In the higher or mental and moral realm*, e.g., education, religion. In this highest realm let us ponder (a) *The signs of neglect*; listlessness and dullness; or profligacy and obduracy. (b) *The temptations to neglect*; example, spirit of procrastination, pressure of other claims. II.—THE GUILT OF THIS NEGLECT. It is (a) *spiritual suicide*. We need not take poison; starving oneself is self-destruction, and neglect is this. Need not leap into the sea from the wreck; neglect the life-boat, that is enough. It is (b) *ruinous in its influence on others*. You say “No danger,” when the peril is terrific. It is (c) *practical atheism*. “Without God,” that is neglect. (d) *ingratitude to the Redeemer*. To ignore, to neglect, is to wrong and to wound.

EDITOR.

The Cry of the City.

“THE CRY OF THE CITY.”—1 *Samuel* v. 12.

THERE is a *hum* of the city in its ceaseless activity, a *shout* in its occasional excitement, a *song* in its periodic mirth, but a *cry* in its constant want, distress, pain. Paul heard it at Athens and his “heart was stirred”; Jesus at Jerusalem and “He wept.” Do we not hear it in every city, and is not the cry somewhat thus? I.—I am SENSITIVE and might be TOUCHED WITH TRUTH AND LOVE. II.—I am RESTLESS and so always SEEKING SOME UNATTAINED GOOD. III.—I am STRONG and might be POWERFUL FOR GOD AND HUMANITY. IV.—I am SINFUL and must have RELIGION OR RUIN. Does anyone fail to hear these cries, let him listen to “The Bitter Cry of Outcast London,” or gaze sadly at “Horrible London,” or ponder “The Politics of the very Poor.”

EDITOR.

RIGHtheartedness.

“LET MY HEART BE SOUND IN THY STATUTES ; THAT I BE NOT ASHAMED.”
—*Psalm cxix.* 80.

HERE we have a desire for the right in religion. Some follow religion merely for safety from penalty, some merely for its excitement, and others for gain ; but the Psalmist desires to be “right” just because it is right, and does not make ashamed. I.—THE PRAYER. “Let my heart be sound.” (1) *It is a definite prayer.* Holiness means wholeness,—sound in faith, in charity, in patience. Why should not Christian people seek to be somewhat like Abraham for faith, Joseph for purity, Daniel for integrity, Paul for zeal, and John for love? (2) *It is a personal prayer.* “Let my heart.” II.—THE OCCASION for this prayer. (1) *After the excitements of conversion.* (2) *In a time of temptation.* (3) *When engaged in self-examination.* (4) *In times of persecution.* (5) *In times of work and witnessing for the Saviour.* (6) *In affliction.* III.—A STRONG REASON for this prayer. “That I be not ashamed.” (1) That I be not ashamed of the *profession* I have made. (2) That I be not ashamed *before men*, in the ship, in the shop, at the polling booth ; that I may live respected and die lamented. (3) That I may not be ashamed *before God* at His coming, but joyfully hear, “Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.”

GREENOCK,

D. BROTCHE.

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“One old man said to another—‘I am dead to this world.’ ‘Do not trust yourself,’ quoth the other, ‘till you are out of this world. If you are dead the devil is not.’”

“John, the dwarf, wanted to be ‘without care, like the angels, doing nothing but praise God.’ So he threw away his cloak, left his brother, the Abbot, and went into the desert. But after seven days he came back and knocked at the door ; ‘Who is there?’ asked his brother, ‘John?’ ‘Nay ; John is turned into an Angel, and is no more among men.’ So he left him outside all night, and, in the morning, gave him to understand that if he was a man he must work, but that if he was an angel he had no need to live in a cell.”—From *The Words of the Elders*.

## Pulpit Handmaids.

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### LUTHER AT WORMS.

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It was a stately hall,  
 Where keen-eyed thousands thronged, and he stood sole  
 Before the empire's chief with yea or nay  
 To answer for his faith.  
 There Charles sat throned  
 In pride of youth, the lord of half the world,  
 Whose name the seas bore forth; the arbiter  
 Of creeds; and round him ranged a kingly crowd—  
 Electors, sovereign dukes, and counts, who held  
 Broad lands in fear; ambassadors who planned  
 For rival ends; and nuncios of the Pope—  
 Astutest Leo, scheming west and east—  
 Armed *cap-à-pie*, with powers of Mother Church,  
 Its fiery threatenings, and the world's base bribes,  
 And proof against all weapons of the soul.  
 Archbishops scowled, and bishops leaned to hear,  
 With low anathemas, and doctors sat  
 With half-sheathed quibble, ready for the fray.  
 The eve had darkened, and they gathered near  
 With torches, glaring 'mid the denser gloom :  
 So Judas came with flaming torch at night.  
 A monk unarmoured, save in faith; he spoke  
 Of conscience, and the right to build man's thought,  
 And Christian practice on God's Written Word ;  
 Then,—“ *Here I stand ; no other can I do ;  
 God help me !* ” And the vast assembly held  
 Perplexed its ire in waiting silence, like  
 The pause when nature hushes at the voice  
 Of tempest rolled along the lofty skies.  
 The might of many thunders dwells in truth.

WILLIAM STEVEN.

## Suggestions for Science Parables.

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*All material Nature is but a parable of spiritual realities.*

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"Two worlds are our's, 'tis only sin  
Forbids us to descry,  
The mystic Earth and Heaven within,  
Clear as the sea or sky."

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### PARASITISM.

WITHIN the body of the Hermit-crab a minute organism may frequently be discovered resembling, when magnified, a miniature kidney-bean. A bunch of root-like processes hangs from one side, and the extremities of these are seen to ramify in delicate films through the living tissues of the crab. This simple organism is known to the naturalist as a *Sacculina*; and, though a full-grown animal, it consists of no more parts than those just named. Not a trace of structure is to be detected within this rude and all but inanimate frame; it possesses neither legs, nor eyes, nor mouth, nor throat, nor stomach, nor any other organs, external or internal. This *Sacculina* is a typical parasite. By means of its twining and theftuous roots it imbibes automatically its nourishment ready-prepared from the body of the crab. It boards, indeed, entirely at the expense of its host, who supplies it liberally with food and shelter and everything else it wants. So far as the result to itself is concerned this arrangement may seem at first sight satisfactory enough; but when we inquire into the life history of this small creature we unearth a career of degeneracy all but unparalleled in nature. One reason which makes a zoologist certain that the *Sacculina* is a degenerate type is, that in almost all other instances of animals which begin life in the Nauplius-form—and there are several—the Nauplius develops through higher and higher stages, and arrives finally at the high perfection displayed by the shrimp, lobster, crab, and other crustaceans. But instead of rising to its opportunities, the sacculine Nauplius having reached a certain

point turned back. It shrunk from the struggle for life, and beginning probably by seeking shelter from its host went on to demand its food; and so falling from bad to worse, became in time an entire dependant.

In the eyes of Nature this was a twofold crime. It was first a disregard of evolution, and second, which is practically the same thing, an evasion of the great law of work. And the revenge of Nature was therefore necessary. "Any new set of conditions," says Ray Lankester, "occurring to an animal which render its food and safety very easily attained, seem to lead as a rule to degeneration; just as an active healthy man sometimes degenerates when he becomes suddenly possessed of a fortune; or as Rome degenerated when possessed of the riches of the ancient world. The habit of parasitism clearly acts upon animal organization in this way. Let the parasitic life once be secured, and away go legs, jaws, eyes, and ears; the active, highly-gifted crab, insect, or annelid may become a mere sac, absorbing nourishment and laying eggs." \*

There could be no more impressive illustration than this of what, with entire appropriateness, one might call "the physiology of backsliding." We fail to appreciate the meaning of spiritual degeneration, or detect the terrible nature of the consequences, only because they evade the eye of sense. But could we investigate the spirit as a living organism, or study the soul of the backslider on principles of comparative anatomy, we should have a revelation of the organic effects of sin, even of the mere sin of carelessness as to growth and work, which must revolutionize our ideas of practical religion. There is no room for the doubt even that what goes on in the body does not with equal certainty take place in the spirit under the corresponding conditions.

The direction in which we have to seek the wider application of the subject will now appear. We have to look into those cases in the moral and spiritual sphere in which the functions of nutrition are either neglected or abused. To sustain life, physical, mental, moral, or spiritual, some sort of food is essential. To

secure an adequate supply each organism also is provided with special and appropriate faculties. But the final gain to the organism does not depend so much on the actual amount of food procured as on the exercise required to obtain it. In one sense the exercise is only a means to an end, namely, the finding food; but in another, and equally real sense, the exercise is the end, the food the means to attain that. Neither is of permanent use without the other, but the correlation between them is so intimate that it were idle to say that one is more necessary than the other. Without food exercise is impossible, but without exercise food is useless. Thus exercise is in order to food, and food is in order to exercise—in order especially to that further progress and maturity which only ceaseless activity can promote. Now food too easily acquired means food without that accompaniment of discipline which is infinitely more valuable than the food itself. It means the possibility of a life which is a mere existence. It leaves the organism *in statu quo*, undeveloped, immature, low in the scale of organization, and with a growing tendency to pass from the state of equilibrium to that of increasing degeneration. What an organism is depends upon what it does; its activities make it. And if the stimulus to the exercise of all the innumerable faculties concerned in nutrition be withdrawn by the conditions and circumstances of life becoming, or being made to become, too easy, there is first an arrest of development, and finally a loss of the parts themselves. If, in short, an organism does nothing, in that relation it is nothing.

We may, therefore, formulate the general principle thus: *Any principle which secures food to the individual without the expenditure of work is injurious, and accompanied by the degeneration and loss of parts.*

From "*Natural Law in the Spiritual World*,"

by HENRY DRUMMOND, F.R.S.E., F.G.S.

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Philosophy holds an easy triumph over misfortunes which are past and those which are to come; but those that are present triumph over her.—*Roche foucault.*

## ADVENT NOTES.

WHAT was this star? Somehow we feel no great interest in this question. The *what* here proves nothing—suggests nothing; the *why* is everything, and the *why* we know. That “star” was *God’s guide* to these eastern inquirers. Thus it is ever with spirits that are in earnest quest after truth. The “Great Jehovah” will guide them. It is a law “settled in Heaven,” that he who seeks shall find; to him there is promised ONE that “shall lead into all truth.” Let those vigorous spirits of this age, who have out-thought old human systems of belief, and are leaving them, many, as these “wise men,” left their homes in search of something else, be fervent and faithful, be diligent and devout, and on their intellect shall rise, ere long, some Divine idea that, like the “star,” shall guide them to Bethlehem, where dwells THE LOGOS.

DAVID THOMAS, D.D.

CHRISTIANITY was vaguely anticipated by the thoughts and hearts of men for ages before it came. Not merely Judæa, but Athens and Alexandria; not merely the heirs of Abraham’s promises, but heathens feeling after God, if haply they might find Him, expected Him to reveal Himself, listened for Him to speak. They looked out upon the old world, such as it was—a stage on which all the moral laws witnessed to by the natural conscience were perpetually violated; they looked up to the throne of Heaven. “Surely,” they said, “if there be a moral God, He must interfere; sooner or later He will rend the Heavens and come down; the clouds and darkness that seem to be round about Him will not always hide from our eyes the righteousness and judgment that are the habitations of His seat.”

And now He has spoken, nay, He has come among us. And if a man is to accept Christianity, he must recognise in his own case, as well as generally, the force of the fact to which Christianity appeals; the fact that man needs it.

CANON LIDDON, D.D.

THE mysterious grandeur which is thrown around the personality of the Author of our religion, is dearly bought if it removes

Him beyond the reach of our human sympathies, or makes it impossible to think of Him as in any real sense sharing our sorrows, infirmities, and temptations, and as exhibiting in His life an ideal of excellence to which all human beings may aspire. The most precious ingredient of Christianity is, it is said, the ideal which Christ's character and life present of what humanity essentially is, and of what we may become. It communicates a new inspiration to virtue, a new impulse to moral endeavour, to contemplate in Him a revelation of the hidden beauty and greatness of our nature. It ministers strength to us amidst the temptations of life, to see how a noble human spirit triumphed over them; and human wretchedness, through a hundred generations, has found its sweetest consolation in the thought of the tender sympathy of one who drank more deeply than all other mortals of the cup of suffering, who was pre-eminently "The man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief."

JOHN CAIRD, D.D.

ALL history is the account of God's revealing Himself to man. We connect together these three facts,—He was in the world: He was with the world: He was made flesh. Remember the gradations. God is in the world, unconsciously in the brute animals, nearer in human beings, nearer still in the higher specimens of the race, nearest—awfully more near—in Christ. And Advent has taught us to look for a nearer revelation still, a day when "we shall see Him as He is." F. W. ROBERTSON.

THE Incarnation itself is an event so auspicious and glorious that everybody knowing it ought to be taken by some great mental commotion, lifted by some unwonted inspiration. Any most common soul ought to kindle as in flame, and break out in poetic improvisings. Having wings in the religious outfit of our nature, it would even be a kind of celestial impropriety if God's Spirit did not spread them here. Why the very ground ought to let forth its reverberated music, and all the choirs, and lyres, and ringing cymbals of the creation, between the two horizons and above, ought to be discoursing hymns, and pouring down their joy, even as the stars do light.

HORACE BUSHNELL.

## Selected Acorns from a Stalwart Oak.

MARTIN LUTHER.

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"The smallest living *acorn* is fit to be the parent of *oak-trees* without end."

—*Carlyle.*

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THE BIBLE AND THE PAPACY.—"Our unthankfulness for, and light esteem of God's Word will do more than anything to help the Pope into the saddle again."

HUMAN DEPRAVITY.—"If thou hast not done that sin which another has done, so has he not committed that sin which thou hast done, therefore cry quits one with another. 'Tis as the man said that had young wolves to sell; he was asked which of them was the best. He answered: If one be good, then they are all good, they are all like one another."

JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH.—"The first, the noblest, the sublimest of all works is faith in Jesus Christ. It is from this work that all other works must proceed; they are but the vassals of faith, and receive their efficacy from it alone."

PHARISEEISM.—"Take heed, not only of your sins, but also of your good works. All a Christian's grace and all his gracious evidences should be but a golden bridge, or as Joseph's waggons—a means to pass his soul over to Christ afresh by a renewed exercise of faith."

THE SPIRIT OF ADOPTION.—"Wherefore this little word, Father, conceived effectually in the heart, passeth all the eloquence of Demosthenes, Cicero, and of the most eloquent rhetoricians that ever were in this world. The matter is not expressed with words, but with groanings, which cannot be uttered without any words or eloquence, for no tongue can express them."

THE LORD'S PRAYER.—"The three first petitions in our Lord's Prayer comprehend such great and celestial things that no heart is able to search them out. The fourth contains the whole policy and economy of temporal and house government, and all things necessary for this life. The fifth fights against our own evil consciences and against original and actual sins which trouble them. Truly that prayer was penned by wisdom itself; none but God could have done it."

MUSIC FOR THE YOUNG.—"We must of necessity maintain music in school. A school-master ought to have skill in music, otherwise I would not regard him. Neither should I ordain young fellows to the office of preaching except they have been well exercised and practised in school music."

BRISTOL THEOLOGICAL INSTITUTE.

T. BROUGHTON KNIGHT.

## Reviews.

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THE WISDOM OF GOETHE. By JOHN STUART BLACKIE, Emeritus Professor of Greek in the University of Edinburgh. William Blackwood & Sons.

This is a very good book, and its contents are nicely arranged. There is a compendious chronological summary of Goethe's life, followed by an eighty-paged essay, by Professor Blackie, on the character of his hero. The remainder of the handsome volume is occupied entirely with the wisdom of Goethe. Specimens of all the best things are given which the great German has ever written upon life, character, morals, religion, politics, literature, poetry, philosophy, metaphysics, logic, truth, science, nature, natural history, art, women, education, and culture. Professor Blackie has used Carlyle's translation of Wilhelm Meister, and Oxenford's Conversations of Eckermann, for the purposes of this work; but, with these exceptions, all the other extracts, whether in prose or verse, have had the advantage of being translated by the Professor himself directly from the German. A perusal of this work will give any intelligent reader a very good idea indeed of what Goethe was as a thinker and a philosopher. Professor Blackie, like Carlyle, places Goethe upon a very high pedestal. We are reluctant to join issue with two such competent authorities; yet, at the same time, are unable to agree that they are right in their estimate of the exalted position which should be assigned to him. It does not appear to us that his works are of such absolutely transcendent splendour as some admirers, like Matthew Arnold, assert. That they abound with beautiful passages, charged with much wisdom, and well worthy of perusal and study, is, of course, admitted. Moreover, Goethe was a genius, and since his mode of looking at all questions was especially his own, and his utterances are catholic, broad, and often brave, no one can read such a book as this specimen one without being the better for it. With regard to Goethe's character, it seems that Professor Blackie entertains the opinion that the poet well deserves "to be handed down to long generations as the model of a perfectly wise and virtuous man." It is to be observed, however, that the Professor does not bring into his account any important new biographical fact which has not already been related by Mr. George Henry Lewes, in his able "Life of Goethe." It may, therefore, be a fair question whether his intense enthusiasm has not gilded his vision of his hero. Be this as it may, we must congratulate

the Professor upon the production of a most admirable, judicious, and compact work, containing all that is best of Goethe. It should be warmly welcomed and largely read, for it teems with morality, wisdom, wit, and beauty.

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THE GUIDING LIGHT : Advent, Watch-Night, and New Year Addresses.  
By SAMUEL D. HILLMAN. London : James Nisbet, Berner's Street

The title indicates what are the aspects of Christian truth and experience with which this work deals. They are suggested by the season of the year through which, once again, we are passing ; the season that is eloquent even to deepest pathos, whether we regard the associations with which the Church invests it, or the impressions that the death of an old year and the birth of a new always produce. Without any pretension of profundity or of much elaboration these Addresses open a vein of refined, suggestive, and practical meditation that must be very welcome to the best class of readers. The evidences of careful consideration, of honest thinking, of quiet strength that mark the book greatly enhance its worth. And, though it be a smaller matter, it is not unimportant that the printing, binding, and entire get up of the volume make it a very appropriate gift-book for the season.

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THOUGHTS ON HOLINESS. By MARK GUY PEARSE. London : T. Woolmer, City Road.

Those of our readers who recall some bright pages contributed by Mr. Mark Guy Pearse to *The Homilist* will find the same characteristics in this little book he has just issued, for it is a fresh and hopeful, buoyant, clear, and telling treatment of its important theme. In its eleven chapters our author deals in a plain, Scriptural, and, withal, gloriously human way with the conception of holiness as men may embody it, and with the methods of embodying it. It is a book to charm and cheer all who are longing to be loyal to "the King's command,"—"Be perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

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THE DOCTRINE OF SACRED SCRIPTURE. By GEORGE T. LADD, D.D.  
Edinburgh : T. and T. Clark, 38, George Street.

If men in this age purchase books according to their intrinsic worth and importance, such a work as this would obtain a large circulation, and find its way into the libraries of every thoughtful man. But, alas, only a few secure books, either on account of their inherent excellence or the

valuable service they are capable of rendering. We subjoin the contents of these two valuable volumes, in order that our readers may form a juster judgment on their merits than from any description we could give.

The nature of Old Testament Scripture, as determined by the teaching of Christ—The Nature of New Testament Scripture, as determined by the promises of Christ—The Claims of the Old Testament in general, and of Mosaism in particular—The Claims of Prophetism and the Hokhinah—The Claims for the Old Testament, by the Writers of the New—The Claims of the New Testament, by its own Writers—The Doctrine of Sacred Scripture as related to the Scientific Contents of the Bible—The Doctrine of Sacred Scripture as related to the Miraculous Contents of the Bible—The Doctrine of Sacred Scripture as related to the Historical Contents of the Bible—The Doctrine of Sacred Scripture as related to the Predictive Contents of the Bible—The Doctrine of Sacred Scripture as dependent upon the Ethico-Religious Contents of the Bible—The Doctrine of Sacred Scripture as related to the Authorship and Composition of the Biblical Book—The Doctrine of Sacred Scripture as related to the Language and Style of the Biblical Books—The Doctrine of Sacred Scripture as related to the History of the Canon—The Doctrine of Sacred Scripture as related to the text of the Bible—Inductive Theory of Sacred Scripture—The Doctrine of Sacred Scripture in the period preceding the Christian Era—The Doctrine of Sacred Scripture in the Ancient Church—The Doctrine of Sacred Scripture, from A.D. 250 to the Protestant Reformation—The Doctrine of Sacred Scripture, from the Reformation to 1750—The Doctrine of Sacred Scripture, from 1759 to the Present Time—The Personality of God—Revelation—The Spirit and the Bible—The Subject of Revelation and Inspiration—The Media of Revelation—Inspiration—The Bible and the Word of God—The Bible and the Church—The Authority of the Bible—The Bible as Translated and Interpreted—The Bible as a Means of Grace—The Bible and the Individual Man—The Bible and the race.

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SUNSET GLEAMS: From the French of A. D. SCHAEFFER. London: Eliot Stock, 62, Paternoster Row.

This book has been carefully and ably translated from a French work, entitled, "*Au Declin de la Vie*," by Mr. F. A. Freer, of Bristol. Under the form of an old man's journal is portrayed, with considerable truth and force, the progress of a human spirit from doubt in the existence of a God and a future life to that firm and steadfast faith which, perhaps, only comes to him who has doubted. The book, however, is chiefly remarkable

for the clever and convincing manner in which the question of "conditional immortality" is treated in it. The author brings great learning and considerable research to bear on his subject, and has succeeded, although we do not always agree with him, in giving us an intensely interesting and well written contribution to this great question. It should be added that the book is well printed and attractively bound, and would form an admirable gift book to any interested (and who is not?) in the great questions with which it deals. As fair specimens of the author's ability and the translator's style we give the following:—"I am a *ruin* which can hardly stand upright: time is demolishing me bit by bit. Within the ruin is a flickering flame, a spark which threatens me at every moment to go out—and they wish me long life!" (p. 1.) "I pass over my *youth*. Stormy years in which the blood seems to ferment in the veins, in which the most generous impulses of the heart bravely encounter insurmountable difficulties, in which the eager spirit rushes forward in the search for truth; noble efforts, tinged with poetry, but most frequently vain, paralyzed by bitter deceptions" (p. 6). "What remains of these *pleasures* which we see in passing? They are like those rare flowers which we gather on some distant excursion. When we get home they are put between the leaves of an album, where they dry up, wither, and lose their brightness and perfume, and eventually escape as mere dust from the book in which they had been placed for safety" (p. 15). "That which constitutes the man is not the body nor the visible elements of which it is composed. It is the *invisible principle* which animates it. This letter in my hand consists of paper and ink, but these written characters have a sense; they serve as the vehicle for invisible ideas. In the same way there is hidden in some unknown, secret, region of the body something immaterial" (p. 25). "The soul is able to kill the body,—it can break the body like a toy or an instrument that belongs to it; but in its turn the body can paralyze its efforts and impose bounds which it cannot pass" (p. 35). "I had found my road to Damascus. The work begun by my own reflections, was completed—as by a lightning flash—at the moment of Jane's death" (p. 57). "Life is an enigma, the most dreadful of all; and I see but one solution of it: the belief in a *future life*. . . . God is love. He has created us capable of entering into nearer and nearer relations with Him, of rising out of the darkness towards the eternal light" (p. 113). "*Jesus* was a being standing alone, in whom holiness was incarnate, who was the possessor of marvellous powers, and who, for the salvation of mankind, emptied the bitter cup" (p. 159).

It may be added that the book we have reviewed furnishes, as foot-notes, the opinions of very eminent men in support of the views advanced.

WITH THE POETS. By F. W. FARRAR. London: Suttaby and Co., Amen Corner.

Such a volume as this will scarcely fail to attain a large circulation. It contains poems from some of our choicest bards, and they are selected by one who has every capability, both by judgment and taste, to make the best choice. The general plan of the work has been to arrange together the chief poets of each century, and to add selections from the minor poets. The term minor poets is not always intended as a note of distinct inferiority. The order in which the passages are placed is not in every case strictly chronological.

We have here some of the choicest poetic creations of Addison, Barbauld, Beattie, Beaumont, Blake, Browning, Burns, Butler, Byron, Campbell, Carlyle, Chatterton, Chaucer, Churchill, Clough, H. Coleridge, S. Coleridge, Collins, Cowper, Crasshan, Cunningham, Dekker, Drayton, Drummond, Dryden, Dyer, Eliot, Emerson, Habington, Hamilton, Heber, Hemans, Herbert, Herrick, Hogg, Hood, Hunt, Samuel Johnson, Ben Johnson, Keats, Keble, Kingsley, Lamb, Landor, Lindsay, Longfellow, Lovelace, Lytton, Macaulay, Marlowe, Mawell, Milton, Montgomery, Moore, Nairne, Poe, Pope, Procter, Raleigh, Rogers, Scott, Shakespeare, Shelley, Shirley, Sidney, Smith, Southey, Spenser, Stanley, Sylvester, Thomson, Tickell, Vaughan, Waller, Waring, Wesley, Bianco White, Kirke White, Wilson, Wolfe, Wordsworth, Wolton.

The work has several beautiful pictorial illustrations, is most elegantly got up, and is one of the very best books for Anniversary, or school presents.

BRANDS PLUCKED FROM THE BURNING; and how they were saved. By J. H. WILSON, D.D. London: T. W. Partridge and Co.

RECORDS OF FIVE YEARS' MISSION WORK IN BRISTOL. By C. R. PARSONS. London: W. Mack, Paternoster Square.

These little volumes are very similar in their size, purpose, tone, and contents. Both tell of vice, and crime, and woe that may well cause us shame and heart-break as a nominally Christian nation, and both tell of the redeeming influence of the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the hands of devoted and persevering Christian workers. Both books indicate the manifold methods of doing good that the Gospel inspires, and by which it is brought home to those who seemed most hopelessly lost to its influences. We strongly recommend those who are beginning such work and who need counsel, and those also who are growing weary in it and need fresh ardour, to get these books, and to become so familiar with them that they will henceforth be unable to ignore the wants of sinful men, or to doubt the resources of the Divine Gospel. They are, indeed, part of that great library of the Evidences of Christianity which grows daily.

THE AUTHORITY OF HOLY SCRIPTURE, a Restatement of the Argument, by Rev. R. A. REDFORD, M.A., LL.B., Professor of New College, London. The Religious Tract Society.

Mr. Redford, like many whose books we are, from time to time, called upon to review by their publishers, is known to our readers as having contributed to *The Homilist*. His learning, perspicuity of thought and style, fairness to opponents, and thorough belief in the authority of the Bible, all qualify him for the task he has here in hand. The first sentences of his preface indicate alike his aim and spirit. "A restatement of arguments in favour of Christianity must be expected to be necessary as knowledge increases and objections change. Modern criticism has attacked the letter of Scripture, as well as its statements and doctrines. To some extent the position of believers is not the same as it was. We do not feel called upon to defend views which have been held in former times, as, e.g., on the mode of inspiration, the form of the supernatural in words. But we stand firmly on the ground of *the Divine authority in the Bible*." Mr. Redford proceeds to give, in eight succinct chapters, the usual arguments that sustain that authority for the Bible which he claims. We should have been more satisfied had he emphasised and elaborated the chief of these, namely, the adaptation of the Bible to human wants, its glorious congruousness with human nature.

#### BOOKS ON OUR TABLE FOR NOTICE.

The English Village Community, by F. Seebohm (Longmans). Heroes of Literature, by John Dennis (Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge). Enoch the Prophet, by Dr. Laurence (Kegan Paul). Studies in the Christian Evidences, by Dr. Mair. Lessons from the Life of Jesus. The Lord's Prayer, by Newman Hall (T. and T. Clark). Saturday's Bairn, by Brenda (F. Shaw). Teacher's Prayer Book, by Dr. Bany (Spottiswoode). Stray Pearls, by Charlotte Yonge, Vols. I. and II. (Macmillan). The Spiritual Combat. The Soliloquy of the Soul. St. Augustine's Confessions (Suttaby and Co.). Best of Everything (Warne & Co.). Notes on the Canons of the First Four General Councils, by Dr. Bright (Oxford Clarendon Press). How to Prevent Consumption, by R. Howat (Balliere, Tindall & Co.). The Youth's Business Guide (Wyman & Sons). Assyrian Life and History, by Stuart Poole. Cleopatra's Needle, by James King, M.A. (Religious Tract Society). Life of Rev. Robert Bushell, by S. Barton (T. Newton). Outline Sunday Pictures, by C. Birch (Bagster & Co.). The Quiver, for 1883 (Cassell). The Gospel of St. Mark, by Dr. Lindsay (Blackie & Son). Universalism, by T. MacDonald, M.A. (Hatchards & Co.). The Bastilles of England, by L. Lowe. Crookenden. Floral Series (Walker). Chatterbox, 1883. The Prize. Boy's Own Paper, 1883. Girl's Own Paper. Happy Day. Mother's Knee, &c.





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